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Cover illustration, front: Sam Houston, the U.S. Senate's "magnificent barbarian" and Mormonism's highest profile friend during the Utah War. He has here added to his conventional gentleman's suit his famous Cherokee blanket and white beaver hat that so titillated Washington society. Photograph 1857 by Charles De Forest Fredricks of New York. Courtesy of Sam Houston Memorial Museum, Huntsville, Texas.

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Actors depicting Joseph and Emma as an affectionate monogamous couple during the “Letters of Joseph and Emma” vignette, one of several short, live-action pieces that are performed throughout old Nauvoo during the run of the Nauvoo Pageant, 2011. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are from the Lee Wiles collection.

MONOGAMY UNDERGROUND: THE BURIAL OF MORMON PLURAL MARRIAGE IN THE GRAVES OF JOSEPH AND EMMA SMITH

Lee Wiles

THE MORTAL REMAINS OF EMMA, JOSEPH, and Hyrum Smith have received a great deal more attention than is typical for dead bodies. According to the most commonly told version of events, Joseph and Hyrum's remains have been twice buried, once entombed, and thrice memorialized. For her part, Emma has been once buried, once entombed, and four times memorialized. The biographies of their dead bodies have been well documented.¹ As theirs are the remains of prominent leaders of the early Latter Day Saint move-

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¹For the two best published accounts, see Lachlan Mackay, "A Brief History of the Smith Family Nauvoo Cemetery," *Mormon Historical Studies* 3, no. 2 (Fall 2002): 240-52; Barbara Hands Bernauer, "Still 'Side by Side'—The Final Burial of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," *John Whitmer Histori-*

ment,² they have generated interest in their whereabouts, desires to find them, a will to move them, and the mobilization of considerable resources to memorialize and represent them in particular ways.

These dead bodies and the monuments and location—namely Nauvoo, Illinois—that mediate access to them, have had much to say about and to the living. Katherine Verdery’s work in *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies* and Michael Kammen’s *Digging Up the Dead* have inspired and informed this article and its focus on the locations, arrangements, ownership, and memorializations of Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma Smith’s remains as they fit into a broader historical matrix of knowledge about, attention toward, investment in, effacement of, and conflict concerning Joseph and Emma’s views of and practices related to plural marriage.³ As this project evolved, Emma and her postmortal remains emerged at the center of the analysis. In that re-

cal Association Journal 11 (1991): 17–33.

²“Mormon,” “Latter-day Saint,” and “LDS” refer to persons, institutions, and theologies associated with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints headquartered in Salt Lake City. The term “Mormon,” though it is sometimes applied to all early followers of Joseph Smith Jr. is now typically used only to refer to members of the LDS Church. “RLDS” and “Community of Christ” refer to the same church in different historical periods. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints adopted the name Community of Christ in 2001. I use “Saint” and “Latter Day Saint,” as broadly applicable terms, to refer to the early followers of Joseph Smith as well as to persons associated with the various churches that evolved from the movement he led between 1830 and 1844. Similarly, the terms “Mormonism,” “Latter Day Saint movement,” and “Restoration” are used to refer to those churches and their common and divergent heritages.

³Places of interment and memorialization have long been recognized as sites where symbolic values are inscribed. Verdery’s focus on the movement, reinterment, and rememorializing of dead bodies and their positioning within political and cultural projects, however, adds to the discourse regarding the meanings produced by the dead in their interactions with the living in practice. Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). For similar work on the United States, see Michael Kammen, *Digging Up the Dead: A History of Notable American Reburials* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

spect, this study of the history of Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma's bodies is unique.

Ultimately, I will explore some of the shifts in the normative vantage points from which LDS and RLDS/Community of Christ adherents interpret and interact with the gravesites of Emma, Joseph, and Hyrum. The history of the LDS Church's promotion in the mid-to-late nineteenth century of remembering Joseph Smith as an advocate and practitioner of plural marriage and its condemnation of Emma for denying the practice was increasingly marginalized in Mormon memory during the twentieth century as Latter-day Saints transitioned away from the idealization of plural marriage and toward a monogamous standard. Thus, the design features of the gravesite memorial to Joseph, Emma, and Hyrum representing RLDS claims that Joseph and Emma's marriage was monogamous increasingly coalesced comfortably with LDS memory of their relationship. As the stream of Mormon tourists to Nauvoo grew in the 1960s and afterward, the RLDS gravesite memorial—the first of which was placed in 1928—was situated to reinforce the monogamous lifestyles of twentieth and twenty-first century Latter Day Saints and the occlusion of the polygamous past of their founder.

ELECT LADIES

On May 2, 1879, friends and relatives laid to rest the body of the woman whose birth name had been Emma Hale, now deceased at the age of seventy-four. Her remains were buried in a gentle slope just a few hundred feet from the Mississippi River on the southern end of a peninsula that from the late 1830s to the mid-1840s had been the bustling heart of Nauvoo, home to approximately twelve thousand inhabitants at its peak. The land in which Emma was interred had been in her family since the community's heyday, but by 1879, it sat amid the quiet ruins of the old city, most Saints having fled in the mid-1840s, either to Utah with Brigham Young or to one of several other communities established throughout the Midwest. Only the village of Nauvoo remained, and its few hundred inhabitants mostly occupied the land above the river bluff, some distance from Emma's place of interment.

By the time of her death, Emma had been known as Mrs. Bidamon, Emma Bidamon, Emma Smith, and Emma Smith Bidamon. Everyone in her acquaintance, however, also knew her as the former wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith, founder of the Latter Day Saint movement. Emma married Joseph Smith Jr. in January of 1827 at age twenty-two

and soon became a central figure of the religious drama of Mormonism's early history.⁴ At the time of Joseph's assassination in June of 1844 by an armed "mob" at the Hancock County jail, she was also his only publicly acknowledged wife.⁵ She had certainly been his first and had lived through several periods of hardship due to her relationship with Jo-

⁴Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, "Elect Lady," Polygamy's Foe, 1804–1879* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1984), 19–20.

⁵While Emma was Joseph's only truly public wife at the time of his death, there is evidence that at least some of his plural wives also mourned his passing with the grief experienced by spouses. They could not do so openly, however, unlike Emma from whom a widow's public ceremonial role and control of the body were accepted. In Emily Dow Partridge (Smith Young)'s recollection of the martyrdom and its aftermath, she writes of her experience at the viewing of Joseph and Hyrum's bodies: "I went with the rest, as a stranger, none suspecting the extra sorrow that was in my heart. . . . I cannot even now write this without weeping." Presumably from the context of the recollection, Emily's "extra sorrow" stemmed from her secret status as a plural wife of Joseph. Emily Dow Partridge [Smith] Young, "From the journal [sic] of Emily Dow Partridge Young," 3, MS 2845, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Similarly, in a recollection signed "Zina D.H. Young Smith," she records that "I was the wife of the Prophet Joseph and as a wife his death was mourned and loss severely felt." Zina Diantha Huntington [Smith] Young, "A Brief Sketch of Zina D.H. Young Smith's Life," 3, CR 11 325, LDS Church History Library. Todd Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 591–92, also notes that wives other than Emma mourned Joseph's passing. He quotes from Mary Ettie Smith's memoirs (no relation to the Joseph Smith family) whose criticisms of Brigham Young and Mormonism in general are quite hostile and not considered uniformly reliable. In 1859 "when the dead bodies [of Joseph and Hyrum] arrived at Nauvoo, the spiritual wives of the late prophet, before unknown with certainty, now disclosed by cries, and a general uproar, their secret acceptance of the new doctrine. One of them, Olive Frost, went entirely mad; but his own wife Emma, appeared remarkably resigned. She afterwards married a Gentile, and disavowed Mormonism." Mary Ettie Smith, *Fifteen Years among the Mormons Being the Narrative of Mrs. Mary Ettie V. Smith*, edited by Nelson Winch Green (New York: H. Dayton, 1859), 36–37. Compton reasonably interprets the cries of Joseph's secret wives as signifying the love they felt for him. Olive Grey Frost (Smith Young) actually died the next year and is buried in

seph and his role as the founder of a new religious movement. During one such period shortly after the official founding on April 6, 1830, of what Saints believed to be Jesus's New Testament church, now restored, Joseph delivered a revelation to Emma in which God bestowed upon her the title of "an elect lady" (LDS D&C 25; RLDS/Community of Christ D&C 24).⁶ The revelation was soon canonized, and Emma became known in the movement as the "elect lady," respected for her intelligence, faithfulness, and devotion to her husband.

Yet Emma's devotion to Joseph did not extend to an acceptance of her husband's engagement in plural marriage.⁷ After Joseph's death, she denounced those who taught both publicly and privately that her husband had been secretly married to multiple women. As the Latter Day Saint movement fragmented, Emma stayed behind in Nauvoo with her children, mother-in-law, and other Smith family members. She quickly became an opponent of Brigham Young who by August 1844 had used his position as senior apostle to gain the loyalty of most of his fellow members of the Twelve and effective control of certain important symbols and structures like the unfinished temple. Young consolidated his position in December 1847 when he became head of a reconstituted First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS), meaning he was Joseph Smith's successor in the eyes of his supporters.⁸ Though it was not until 1852 that the LDS Church openly announced its practice of polygamy, Young's followers had been engaged in new plural marriages since before their departure from Nauvoo.⁹

Also in December 1847, Emma married Major Lewis Bidamon, one of Nauvoo's "new" citizens. Lewis was a non-Latter Day Saint who

Hancock County, Illinois. Janet Lisonbee, "Mormon Nauvoo Area Burials of the 1840s" (2011), 545.

⁶Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 33.

⁷*Ibid.*, 292, 298, 301.

⁸Leonard J. Arrington, *Brigham Young: American Moses* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 153–56.

⁹Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 200. For plural marriages in Nauvoo after Joseph's death, see Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845–46: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005).

had supported the city's residents during their armed confrontations with neighbors from nearby towns and counties, culminating in the autumn of 1846 with the "battle" of Nauvoo and the final expulsion of those Saints who had not already departed.¹⁰ Even Emma fled with her children upriver for a few months after which she returned to Nauvoo where she lived for the rest of her life. More than a decade later in 1860 when her oldest son Joseph Smith III agreed to be ordained prophet of a "reorganized" church, both to carry on the work of his father's restoration and to rival the by then openly polygamous movement in Utah, Emma joined him.¹¹ This Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), a name adopted several years after its founding, was an amalgamation of many groups and individuals that had not followed Brigham Young for various reasons. Several early leaders of the RLDS Church attested that Joseph Smith Jr. had taught the principle of plural marriage, yet all rejected it as a valid part of the Restoration. Joseph Smith III, however, used his position as prophet to both reject polygamy and to deny that his father had advocated or practiced it.¹²

As an ardent proponent of her son's position, Emma's image among the RLDS of the nineteenth century was that of a beacon of truth. A few weeks after Emma's death, Elder Mark Forscutt of the RLDS Church gave a "commemorative discourse" in Plano, Illinois, then RLDS Church headquarters. Speaking of Emma's surviving second husband, Elder Forscutt commented: "Often have I thought of his strong denunciation of some in Utah, who maligned her [i.e., Emma] because she opposed what she believed to be the inequities of

¹⁰Valeen Tippetts Avery and Linda King Newell, "Lewis C. Bidamon, Stepchild of Mormondom," *BYU Studies* 19, no. 3 (1979): 3. "At a Ripe Old Age Major L.C. Bidamon Passes into Eternal Sleep," *Nauvoo Rustler*, February 17, 1891; "Obituary," *Nauvoo Independent* 6, no. 27 (May 9, 1879).

¹¹For an RLDS account of Emma's influence on her children and on the RLDS Church in life and in death, see Joseph Smith III and Heman C. Smith, eds., *History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1805-1890*, 4 vols.; continued by F. Henry Edwards as *The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vols. 5-8 (Independence: Herald House, 1897-1903, 1952 printing), 4: 267-72.

¹²Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 190-91, 198-209; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 237-40.

their system,”¹³ “system” being a euphemism for plural marriage. During Forscutt’s lengthy sermon, he several times referred to Emma as the “elect lady,” and after alluding repeatedly to plural marriage he commented rather forcefully: “That she was not in sympathy with the policy of the church which now exists in Utah, is a matter of history; but that she ever denied any portion of the great work of God, none will be able to prove. With polygamy and all its kindred evils she was ever in deadly warfare, even down to the time of her death.”¹⁴

The inhabitants of Nauvoo at the time seem also to have held Emma and the RLDS Church of which she was a part in high regard.¹⁵ Emma’s death was of such significance within the town that it motivated a second printing of the local paper on May 2, 1879, to correct the omission of a death notice in the first.¹⁶ Almost a century later, locals still shared details of the funeral: “Every statement ever made by anyone who attended that funeral mentions people present weeping that this good woman was no more. Most of these mourners were not Latter Day Saints.”¹⁷

Meanwhile, in Utah, adherents of the LDS Church were disturbed by Emma’s denials that her husband practiced and taught plural marriage. In response to what was known as Emma’s “last testi-

¹³Mark H. Forscutt, “Commemorative Discourse on the Death of Mrs. Lewis C. Bidamon, Wife of Major Lewis C. Bidamon, of Nauvoo, Ill., formerly Wife and Widow of the Prophet Joseph Smith; Delivered at Plano, Ill., June 15th, 1879, By Elder Mark H. Forscutt,” *Saints’ Herald* 26, no. 14 (July 15, 1879): 209.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 216.

¹⁵“Obituary,” *Nauvoo Independent*; Launius, *Joseph Smith III*, 180–81.

¹⁶The *Nauvoo Independent*, May 2, 1879, published a notice that “Mr. Joseph Smith [III], of the *Saints’ Herald*, and his brother A[lexander]. H. Smith, of Andover, Mo., were in the city, called here by the serious illness of their mother, Mrs. L. C. Bidamon. She is improving somewhat.” The second printing includes the notice that “on Wednesday, April 30th, 1879 at 4 o’clock a.m., Mrs. L. C. Bidamon [died], of old age, in her 76th year. Funeral services at the Mansion, at 2 o’clock this Friday afternoon. Mrs. Bidamon was formerly the wife of Joseph Smith, founder of the Mormon church.” The accounts can be found in the two different runs of the *Nauvoo Independent*, both dated May 2, 1879, microfilm, Nauvoo Public Library.

¹⁷Warren L. Van Dine, Letter to Mrs. William Ortman, September 16, 1963, 2, Nauvoo Historical Society Archives.

mony” concerning polygamy, Eliza R. Snow, about whom more will be said below, wrote:

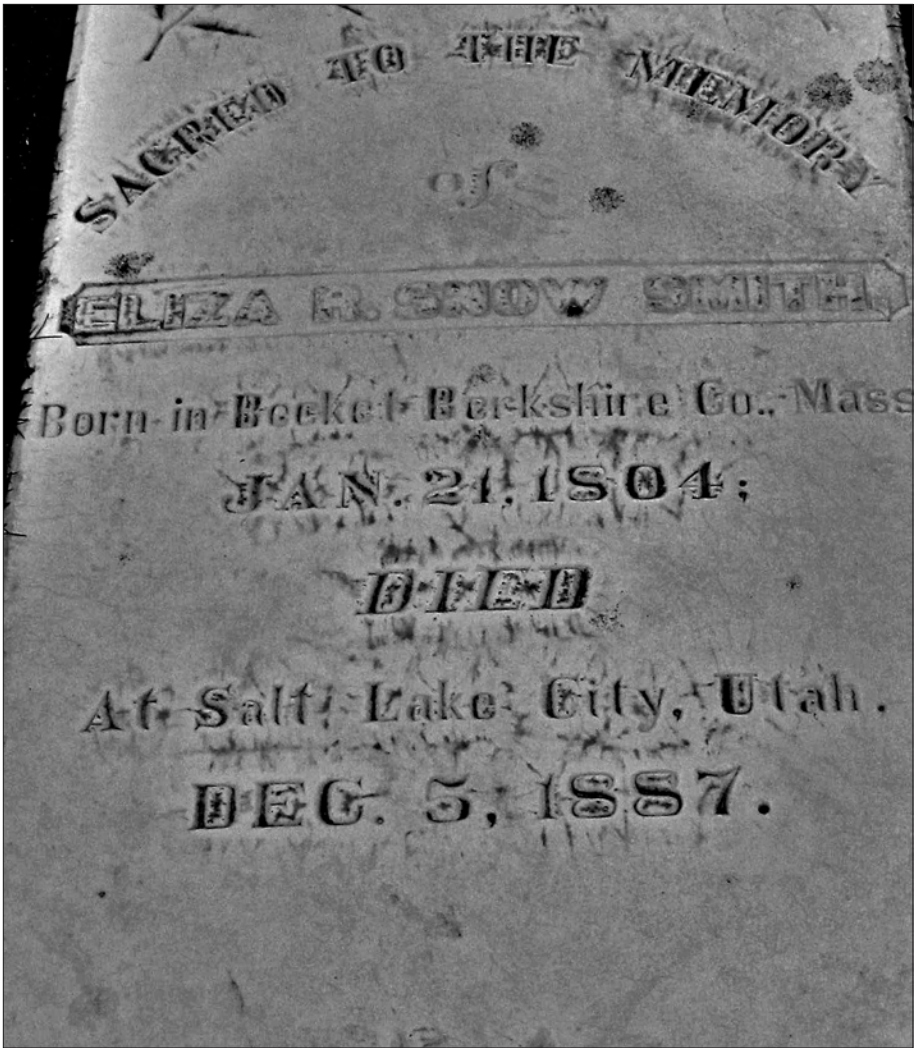
I once dearly loved “Sister Emma,” and now, for me to believe that she, a once honored woman, should have sunk so low . . . as to deny what she *knew* to be true, seems a palpable absurdity. If what purports to be her “last testimony” was really her testimony she died with a libel on her lips—a libel against her husband—against his wives—against the truth, and a libel against God. . . . It is a *fact* that Sister Emma, of her own free will and choice, gave her husband four wives, two of whom are now living, and ready to testify . . . that she taught them the doctrine of plural marriage and urged them to accept it.¹⁸

Eliza signed her letter, “Eliza R. Snow, A wife of Joseph Smith the Prophet.” Furthermore, Emma’s obituary in the *Deseret News*, an LDS Church newspaper, stated: “Her opposition to the doctrine of plural marriage which however she at first embraced led to her departure from the faith of the gospel as revealed through her martyred husband. She chose to remain at Nauvoo when the Saints left for the West, and in consequence lost the honor and glory that might have crowned her brow as ‘the elect lady.’”¹⁹

An example that provides a stark contrast to the LDS Church’s response to Emma’s death in 1879 is the praise bestowed upon Eliza herself when she passed away eight years later in 1887. Eliza was a prominent member of Mormon society both in Nauvoo and later in Utah. As was mentioned above, Eliza had long attested that she had been a plural wife of Joseph Smith during the last two years of his life. Her funeral, much like the news of Emma’s death, became an opportunity to propagandize in support of polygamy. Eliza had been one of the foremost proponents of plural marriage, and her death came during a time of enormous challenges. The period known as the “Raid,” in which thousands of Mormon men were charged with fed-

¹⁸Eliza R. Snow, “Letter on Plural Marriage,” *Woman’s Exponent* 8 (November 1, 1879): 85; emphasis hers. Emma appears to have had a brief window of consenting to the principle of plural marriage in 1843 when she agreed to Joseph’s sealing to Maria and Sarah Lawrence and Emily and Eliza Partridge. Brian C. Hales, *Joseph Smith’s Polygamy, Vol. 2: History* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2013), 2:48.

¹⁹“Death of Emma Smith,” *Deseret News*, May 21, 1879, 248, udn.lib.utah.edu/cdm/ref/collection/deseretnews3/id/2229615 (accessed February 5, 2013).



Gravestone of "Eliza R. Snow Smith" in Salt Lake City, 2009.

eral crimes and hundreds were imprisoned, was well underway. In 1885, LDS leaders had instituted a plan of going on the “Underground” to evade arrest. A few months before Eliza’s death, the Edmunds-Tucker Act passed Congress, badly damaging the LDS Church’s financial status, disfranchising women in Utah, and requiring anti-polygamy oaths from those who wished to exercise basic

democratic civil rights, including voting.²⁰ Only three years later in 1890, LDS President Wilford Woodruff issued the first Manifesto, ostensibly withdrawing official support for new plural marriages. In 1887, however, the effort to publicly promote polygamy in defiance of federal law was going strong, and Eliza's funeral provided an occasion to reassert that Mormon plural marriage originated with the Church's founder, Joseph Smith Jr.

Like several women whose records indicate they were married (or "sealed") to Joseph during his life, Eliza married Brigham Young for time not long after Joseph's death.²¹ Her sealing to Joseph, nonetheless, was for time-and-eternity, meaning she would be his wife in the afterlife. Thus, despite having been married to Brigham Young from 1845 until his death in 1877, just two years before Emma's demise,²² Eliza's relationship with Young was reduced in her *Deseret News* obituary to one in which he provided her with a long-term home when she arrived in the Salt Lake Valley.²³

By contrast, Elder Joseph B. Noble, one of the speakers at Eliza's memorial service, imagined her sweet reunion with Joseph Smith in the afterlife: "The hour draws nigh, when she will hear the voice of her sleeping companion, him who laid down his life for the cause of God, and shed his blood for the same."²⁴ The author of her obituary wrote, "She has gone to mingle with the righteous who have kept the faith; to associate with her husband, the great Prophet of the last dis-

²⁰Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 155–72.

²¹Arrington, *Brigham Young*, 120–21.

²²I mention this point as it seems to have been relevant to Joseph Smith III, then president of the RLDS Church. On May 24, 1879, he wrote T. W. Smith: "I rejoice that Mother outlived Brigham; and has seen her boys standing together for a triumphant truth; and the church almost 'fair as the Moon,' if not yet 'terrible as an army with banners.' I feel that she rests in Peace." Joseph Smith III, Letter Press Book 2, 213–14, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence.

²³"The Life and Labors of Eliza R. Snow Smith; With a Full Account of her Funeral Services" (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1888), 11, archive.org/stream/lifelaborsofeliz00salt#page/n5/mode/2up (accessed February 5, 2013).

²⁴*Ibid.*, 20.

penation, to whom she has shown a sublime devotion that will be appreciated in the eternities to come.”²⁵ The obituary further explains that “her intimate association with Joseph the Seer ripened into a holy consummation, and she, in the year 1843 [sic], became his wife, in accordance with the sacred ordinance of heaven, and the direct command of God to her husband. She thus became one of the first women of this dispensation to enter the sacred and divine order of plural marriage.”²⁶ The author concludes by claiming that it “may be said concerning her that she was indeed ‘an elect lady,’”²⁷ a statement that certainly few Latter Day Saint readers would understand as anything other than an attempt to assert that Eliza had supplanted Emma as the first lady of Mormonism. In fact, throughout the compiled record of Eliza’s funeral service, she is referred to by the name “Eliza R. Snow Smith,” which also appears on her tombstone.²⁸ Eliza was buried in Brigham Young’s family cemetery in Salt Lake City not far from

²⁵Ibid., 12.

²⁶Ibid., 9.

²⁷Ibid., 14.

²⁸Photograph of Eliza’s tombstone, 2009, in my possession. Eliza appears to have begun occasionally using Smith as her surname in May 1880, which was perhaps a respectful and tactical temporal distance from the deaths of both Brigham Young and Emma. See Jill Mulvay Derr, *Mrs. Smith Goes to Washington: Eliza R. Snow Smith’s Visit to Southern Utah, 1880–81*, Juanita Brooks Lecture, May 24, 2004 (St. George, Utah: Dixie State College, 2004), library.dixie.edu/info/collections/brooks/mrs.%20smith%20goes%20to%20washington.htm (accessed February 5, 2013). The use of “Smith” for Eliza throughout her funeral services suggests that at least some close associates had begun using it in later life. Emily Dow Partridge [Smith] Young’s diary noted that she “attended Sister E.R.S. Smiths [sic] funeral.” “Emily D. Youngs [sic] Diary,” 80, MS 2845, LDS Church History Library. Wilford Woodruff addressed Eliza as “Mrs. Eliza R. Snow Smith,” April 12, 1887, MS 15843, LDS Church History Library. According to Derr, Zina D. Huntington and Emily D. Partridge used “Smith” briefly in 1880–81, although “Eliza [R. Snow Smith] was the only one for whom the change of name endured.” I have not yet completed my investigation of the headstones of other likely Smith plural wives, but my preliminary research shows that Desdemona Fullmer was buried in the Salt Lake City Cemetery in 1886 as “Desdemona W. F. Smith.” She was using “Smith” at least some of the time as early as 1868. In a holographic autobiography given to the LDS

her former residence and the headquarters of the LDS Church, but her spirit and her resurrected tabernacle, according to LDS narratives of the time, would be with those of Joseph Smith in eternity, though the exact location of Joseph's body at that point in history was known to very few.

THE MARTYRS

On June 28, 1844, the day after the assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, their bodies were brought back to Nauvoo, prepared for burial, viewed by thousands of mourners, and then, under cover of darkness on June 29, buried secretly. At some point a few months later, in late 1844 or early 1845, the bodies were disinterred and moved to a nearby location across Main Street. By some accounts, they were moved on multiple occasions; in others, they were moved only one time between 1844 and 1928. The details of the moves and

Church Historian's Office that year, Desdemona signs her name as "Desdemona F Smith." See Desdemona Wadsworth Fullmer [Smith], "Papers, 1868," 1, MS 734, LDS Church History Library. She signs her name the same way in an untitled document in the same folder. In Desdemona's death notice, she is similarly named as "Desdemona Wadsworth Fullmer Smith . . . a former wife of the Prophet Joseph Smith." "Death of a Notable Woman," *Deseret News*, February 17, 1886, 73, udn.lib.utah.edu/cdm/ref/collection/deseretnews4/id/2194 (accessed February 7, 2013). Presendia Huntington also used "Kimball [and] Smith" in a holographic autobiography written in 1881. Presendia Lathrop Huntington [Smith] Kimball, "Presendia H. Kimball Reminiscences, 1881," MS 742, LDS Church History Library. Emily Dow Partridge (Smith Young)'s diary, during the same period in which she was sometimes using "Smith" herself, once referred to Louisa Beaman as "Louisa B. Y. Smith" when she viewed Louisa's "head stone" in the cemetery. Emily Dow Partridge [Smith] Young, "Emily D. Youngs [sic] Diary," 62, MS 2845, LDS Church History Library. She may have been ascribing the surname to all the women who purported to be married to Joseph during his lifetime, regardless of whether they had ever used the name themselves. Finally, though I have seen no evidence that Mary Elizabeth Rollins ever wrote her own name including "Smith," the First Presidency invited her to the 1893 dedication of the Salt Lake Temple as "Mrs. Mary [illegible] Elizabeth Lightner Smith." This was more than five years after Eliza's death. See "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner [Smith] Collection, 1865-1957," MS 752 f3, LDS Church History Library.

the locations vary.²⁹ Joseph F. Smith once told of the bodies being buried and reburied four times prior to 1928.³⁰ Another version of the events—with folklore variants that have persisted in diminished forms to the present—attest that the bodies were surreptitiously taken

²⁹For accounts from witnesses and those who claimed to be witnesses, see Joseph Smith III, *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832–1914): The Second Prophet of the Church*, edited by Mary Audentia Smith Anderson (1979; rpt., Independence: Price Publishing Company, 2001), 37–38; B. W. Richmond, “The Prophet’s Death,” *Deseret News*, November 27, 1875. For the semi-official LDS version of events surrounding the handling of Joseph and Hyrum’s bodies, see Joseph Smith et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 7 vols., (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1975 printing), 6:628–29. For a general overview of the locations, moves, and memorializations of Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma’s bodies, see Mackay, “A Brief History,” 240–52; Bernauer, “Still ‘Side by Side,’” 17–33; Gina Alton, “A History of the Smith Family Cemetery” (n.d.), photocopy.

³⁰See LDS Church First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve, Minutes, Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 20, 1911, 2, in Richard E. Turley, ed., *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, DVDs (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002). Joseph F. Smith’s comments came soon after the death of Isaac Manning who had some knowledge of the burials of Joseph and Hyrum as he was the sexton’s assistant at the time of their death. Smith spoke at Manning’s funeral service. It is unclear from the report cited in the minutes whether he shared the version of the four burials with the funeral’s attendees or only with the assembled LDS Church leadership in the meeting on April 20. It is also unclear which details of the moves Manning provided to Smith. Smith stated that Manning “helped remove the bodies” from their original location of burial. No direct statement from Manning corroborates this account. In 1903, Manning said that he did not believe the bodies were ever moved from their original place of burial. Isaac L. Manning, “Statement, November 6, 1903,” MS 3974, LDS Church History Library. See also Isaac L. Manning, letter to Joseph F. Smith, circa December 1900, MS 1325, LDS Church History Library. Another secondhand version of Manning’s telling of events can be found in “Funeral of Isaac Manning,” *Deseret News*, Journal History, April 16, 1911, 1. Isaac and his sister Jane are notable as early African American participants in the Latter-day Saint movement. In the early 1890s, Manning moved to Salt Lake City to join his sister after the death of his wife in Ohio.

to Utah and secretly buried there.³¹

Doubtless contributing to the range of stories was Emma's conflict with Brigham Young over many issues, including disagreements over who should control the martyrs' remains and whether they should be publicly interred, exacerbated by her not unreasonable fear that non-Saints would desecrate the bodies if their location was widely known.³² As a result, the paramount concern of Emma, who in most versions of the events directed all the burials and exhumations up until her death, was secrecy. Accounts of the funeral and the following interments on June 29, 1844, commonly include a deceptive public burial of wood boxes filled with sand or rocks while the coffins containing the real bodies were buried furtively that night. Isaac Manning—a live-in servant of the Smith family in Nauvoo and an assistant to Nauvoo's sexton in which capacity he apparently dug the first graves of Joseph and Hyrum at age twenty-eight—even attested that he and others guarded the false site to throw those who wished to desecrate the bodies off the scent.³³ In fact, the secret of the bodies' location was being kept not only from non-Saints but also from the vast majority of Latter Day Saints as well. It seems that Emma might have even tried to keep the secret of the first move from Hyrum's public wife, Mary Fielding Smith.³⁴ Mary and Emma had agreed to move the bodies on a particular evening, but Emma had unexpectedly cancelled. For some reason, Mary awoke that night and, feeling restless, went

³¹Robert Fillerup, "Musings on the Burial of the Bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith," Paper presented at the Sunstone Theological Symposium, Salt Lake City, 1988, audiocassette in my possession.

³²For the disagreement between Emma and Brigham Young about the burial site, see Joseph Johnstun, "The Tomb of Joseph," Red Brick Store Lecture Series, June 27, 2011, Nauvoo. Johnstun appears to find credible Joseph F. Smith's version of events. See also Johnstun, "'To Lie in Yonder Tomb': The Tomb and Burial of Joseph Smith," *Mormon Historical Studies* 6, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 163–80, describing a brick structure near the Nauvoo Temple in which Joseph Smith intended to house the bodies of his family and those of Sidney Rigdon's family. The tomb was never used for this purpose and was apparently destroyed later in the nineteenth century sometime after the vast majority of Saints had fled.

³³"Funeral of Isaac Manning," and Isaac L. Manning, "Statement, November 6, 1903," MS 3974, LDS Church History Library.

³⁴Hyrum also had two plural wives at the time of his death, but their

to the secret burial spot where, to her surprise, she came upon Emma and a small group of men engaged in exhuming Joseph and Hyrum's remains. Mary, who was already supportive of Brigham Young's leadership and not an opponent of plural marriage, felt betrayed by Emma.³⁵ The event may have further driven a wedge between the two women that influenced their progeny as they aged and became leaders of the LDS and RLDS Churches. Though Mary apparently knew the new resting place of her dead husband, when she, her children, and her sister wives left Nauvoo in 1846, they did so without his body.

Thus it was that the bodies remained unmemorialized in Nauvoo until 1928 and their exact location was a carefully guarded secret, known to but a few individuals inside the Smith family,³⁶ though many outside the family seem to have had knowledge of the general location.

The 1928 memorialization of Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma, however, had its roots in discussions going back nearly three decades. All this activity occurred, moreover, in a span of time that cultural historian Michael Kammen describes as a particularly active period for reburials of notable individuals in the United States more generally. "When they [i.e., reburials and (re)memorializations] are plotted along a time line," he writes, "we find comparatively few between 1800 and 1835, many more between 1845 and 1909, something of a surge during the 1930s, and then fewer after that."³⁷

In August of 1900, J. W. Wight, a leader in the RLDS Church, began advocating publicly for improvements to the area around the lo-

roles, if any, in decision-making regarding the remains of their husband is unknown.

³⁵Don Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith: Daughter of Britain, Portrait of Courage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1966), 173-74; Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 212-13.

³⁶In a rather enigmatic letter written by Joseph Smith III to Saul E. Flannigan, August 1, 1895, Letter Press Book 6, 219, he stated that the "place where Joseph and Hyrum is not definitely known to perhaps any except my brother Alexander and myself. It was for years kept secret for fear of desecration of the graves by reckless men for speculative or evil purpose. My brother and I have been waiting for the transpiring of a certain event, when we would agitate a monument to mark their resting place." My efforts to discover the nature of this "event" have proved fruitless.

³⁷Kammen, *Digging Up the Dead*, 24.

cation where he believed the graves of Joseph and Hyrum were located. He described the site as overgrown and accessible to barnyard animals.³⁸ His dissatisfaction was unquestionably influenced by sentiments that had been molded by nearly a century's worth of American cemetery movements, all of which sought to beautify and protect places of interment. Such a condition would likely not have been as alarming to observers one hundred years earlier.³⁹

A few months after Wight's comments, Joseph Smith III, in response, noted that he would be supportive of such improvements, adding, "The passing of time may have made it safe" to publicly acknowledge his father and uncle's place of burial.⁴⁰ In 1907, a committee on the Monument to the Martyrs—as it would be called after 1909—was established by the RLDS Church to oversee the project.⁴¹ Other than acquiring the burying ground, which required that the deed be transferred from the Smith family to the Church, little progress was made during the next few years.

For the sixty years following Mary Fielding Smith and company's exodus from Nauvoo in 1846, Emma and then Joseph Smith III personally owned the land that included the burial plot for Joseph, Hyrum, and, from 1879 on, Emma. In 1906, Joseph III and his wife, Ada, transferred the deed to Joseph's oldest son, Frederick Madison Smith (known as Fred M.). The transfer bound Fred to "permit John Smith [Joseph F. Smith's brother] of Utah, son of Hyrum Smith, either by himself or an appointee to take the remains of his father to to [sic] dispose of as he may choose." According to Robert Fillerup, Joseph F. Smith—LDS Church president and Mary and Hyrum's son—spoke of his father's remains in a public statement in 1916 (or 1917, as Fillerup says later in the presentation). Jo-

³⁸Wight, quoted in Bernauer, "Still 'Side by Side,'" 20.

³⁹Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the 'Rural Cemetery' Movement," *American Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (1974): 37–59; David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 13–127.

⁴⁰Joseph Smith III, "The Proposed Marking of Graves of the Martyrs," *Saints' Herald* 47, no. 45 (November 7, 1900): 718.

⁴¹"April 12," *Saints' Herald* 54, no. 16 (April 17, 1907), the page number is not visible in my scan; *General Conference Minutes 1908–1916* (Independence: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), 993.

seph F. commented that he had earlier written Joseph Smith III to say that, if Hyrum's remains were ever exhumed, he would travel to Nauvoo himself to bring them back to Utah. He apparently expressed privately that he did not want the RLDS Church to disturb the bodies at all.⁴² I have been unable to locate this correspondence between Joseph F. and Joseph III. In any case, Joseph F. Smith's wishes likely influenced the language of the 1906 deed documents. By 1908, however, a year after the RLDS committee on the Monument to the Martyrs was formed, Joseph Smith III and Ada amended the deed held by Fred to release him of his obligation to John Smith.⁴³ This change in the deed was probably made at the committee's request in preparation for the deed's transfer to the RLDS Church, which occurred before April 1909.⁴⁴

In 1912, Joseph Smith III, at age seventy-nine and with failing eyesight, resigned as the committee's chair under amicable circumstances, and his son, Fred M., succeeded him.⁴⁵ The reconstituted committee had grandiose plans. Their fund-raising goals were set at twenty thousand dollars in order to build a monument to Joseph and Hyrum, improve the land, and hire a groundskeeper who would care

⁴²Fillerup, "Musings on the Burial of the Bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith."

⁴³Photocopy of deeds in my possession. Ada was Joseph III's third and final wife. Joseph Smith III, of course, was married in succession (i.e., monogamously) to each of his wives rather than concurrently. His first wife, Emmeline Griswold, passed away in 1869 and is interred in Nauvoo. Joseph married his second wife, Bertha Madison, later that same year. She passed away in 1896. Joseph III then married Ada Clark in 1898; he predeceased her.

⁴⁴*General Conference Minutes 1908–1916*, 1,200. In any case, John died in 1911, Joseph III in 1914, and Joseph F. in 1918, so none survived to see the exhumation of the remains. In 1928, LDS leaders expressed distaste that the bodies had been disturbed. At one point, "the brethren in Utah talked of chiseling the remains of Hyrum Smith out of the concrete foundation of Frederick's' [sic] yet to be constructed monument" and discussed suing him to retrieve the remains. Alton, "A History of the Smith Family Cemetery," 27; Bernauer, "Still 'Side by Side,'" 31–32. In the end, they took no legal action.

⁴⁵*General Conference Minutes 1908–1916*, 1,553–54. Fred also became RLDS Prophet after his father's death in 1914.



Sarcophagus of Joseph Smith III at Mound Grove Cemetery in Independence, 2011.

for the historic properties and distribute “literature,” presumably for missionary purposes.⁴⁶

But by 1914, priorities had shifted.⁴⁷ In 1913, the Mississippi River was dammed a few miles downstream from Nauvoo, and water levels began to rise. The committee recommended the construction in 1914 of a retaining wall to keep the Mississippi at bay, and in 1915, it advised the General Conference that the graves were in danger of being washed away if funds were not raised to protect the property from rising water.⁴⁸ In the year following, the committee reported that a retaining wall had been completed to protect the property.⁴⁹

By 1917, three years after Joseph Smith III’s death, the Laurel Club of Independence managed to raise sufficient funds to erect a

⁴⁶Ibid., 1,625.

⁴⁷Bernauer, “Still ‘Side by Side,’” 22; Mackay, “A Brief History,” 244.

⁴⁸*General Conference Minutes, 1908–1916*, 1,848, 2,013–14.

⁴⁹Ibid., 2,163.

sarcophagus to house his remains. That achievement was then used as leverage to spur RLDS members to action for the building of a monument to Joseph and Hyrum.⁵⁰ In a *Saint's Herald* article noting the accomplishment, President Fred M. Smith's wife, Ruth, asked, "When will the graves be marked?"⁵¹ In that same year, leadership of the committee was transferred to the Order of Bishops, as it was believed they might have more success at raising funds.⁵² By 1918, two caretakers had been appointed to manage the RLDS Church's historic properties in Nauvoo, including the Smith family homes; and in the next year, there was a report of increased tourist traffic to the site.⁵³

Nonetheless, as 1928 began, the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum still had not been exhumed or memorialized. In fact, searches of Joseph Smith III's letters, Fred M. Smith's journals,⁵⁴ RLDS General Conference minutes,⁵⁵ and other archived papers and publications reveal no evidence that RLDS leaders had plans before mid-1927 to exhume the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum nor to include Emma in the Monument to the Martyrs. Rather, plans were to memorialize Joseph and Hyrum at the place that had been designated as their burial site according to Smith family tradition. It may have been due to the influence of a Kansas City surveyor, W. O. Hands, that plans were first made to exhume Joseph and Hyrum's bodies. In 1920, he traveled to Nauvoo to look into the condition of RLDS Church land. Water had

⁵⁰*General Conference Minutes, 1917-1922* (Independence: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), 2,355-57.

⁵¹Mrs. Frederick M. Smith, "Sarcophagus for Our Late President," *Saints' Herald* 64, no. 15 (April 11, 1917): 347.

⁵²*General Conference Minutes, 1917-1922*, 2,286, 2,357, 2,436-37.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 2,758, 2,951-52; W. Wallace Smith, "Talk Delivered at the 50th Anniversary Service of the Establishment of Guide Service at the Joseph Smith Historical Center, Nauvoo, Ill., May 19, 1968," 1968, 1, RG27 f190, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

⁵⁴Frederick (Fred) M. Smith's journals are in private possession and are cited with permission.

⁵⁵*General Conference Minutes* for 1908-16, 1917-22, and "Minutes of General Conference, 1923," *Supplement to the Saints' Herald*, January 30, 1924, 3,439. Reports from the committee for the Monument to the Martyrs were not available in General Conference minutes for other years prior to 1928.

continued to rise for several years after the installation of the dam on the Mississippi River in 1913, and Church property was sinking below the developing lake. At that time, Hands began to inquire among locals about the place of Joseph and Hyrum's graves. Finding no satisfactory answers, he returned in 1924. "I visited a number of old Nauvoo citizens," he wrote, "and among other things they told me that elders from the Utah church had assured them that the bodies of the martyrs were under a monument in Salt Lake City."⁵⁶

Traces of evidence indicate that some early Brighamites had a desire to transport Joseph and Hyrum's bodies west or believed they had actually done so. For example, on October 16, 1846, Joseph Heywood wrote to Brigham Young: "We wish to say a few words in relation to the Bodies of the Smith family interred on Emmas [sic] place. It is known to some through Emma where they lie. We have thought if it was wisdom to remove them that it could be effected now especially as Emma is out of the way."⁵⁷ Almost one hundred years later, Annie Carter Johnson reported to the Daughters of Utah Pioneers that her father, William Carter, had told multiple family members "many times" that he had delivered Joseph and Hyrum's bodies to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 after Brigham Young personally requested that he do so.⁵⁸

After the bodies identified as those of Joseph and Hyrum were uncovered in 1928, Fred M. and the RLDS "publicity director," J. A. Gardner, suggested to the *Quincy Herald-Whig* that discounting the rumors regarding Joseph and Hyrum's bodies being taken to Utah motivated their search and was "the most important significance of the discovery."⁵⁹ In a Sunstone presentation, Robert Fillerup documented folklore circulating within Utah that claimed that the bodies had

⁵⁶W. O. Hands, Letter "To the Officers of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," 1, P19 f81, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

⁵⁷Joseph Heywood [and John Fullmer], Letter to Brigham Young, October 16, 1846, 2, CR 1234, LDS Church History Library. The letter was written during the short period in which Emma had fled upriver with her children to escape the violence and chaos in Nauvoo.

⁵⁸Annie Carter Johnson, Letter to the State Central Company, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, August 2, 1940, 1, MS 10173, LDS Church History Library.

⁵⁹Dave Tuffli, "Joseph and Hyrum Smith Graves Found in Nauvoo;

been taken to Salt Lake City by specific individuals.⁶⁰ The broader context of circulating rumors aside, I contend that the specific source of the rumors that fueled W. O. Hands and Fred M. Smith's desire to find the bodies was the Nauvooites who, in 1924, told Hands that elders of the LDS Church had "assured" them that the bodies were, in fact, taken to Utah and were memorialized there.⁶¹ Hands and Smith most likely took those statements as representing the LDS position.

On January 31, 1928, however, B. H. Roberts, a leading LDS historian and theologian, wrote a fuming response to RLDS accusations that the LDS Church had either claimed or had failed to refute claims that the bodies had been secretly brought west. Significantly, in his response to RLDS officials, Roberts selectively quotes from a Samuel O. Bennion letter to support his case that LDS authorities had never claimed that the bones of Joseph and Hyrum were taken to Utah. Bennion, then president of the LDS Central States Mission, read about RLDS Church plans to find Joseph and Hyrum's bodies in an Independence newspaper and traveled with three other LDS men to Nauvoo where they arrived in time to witness the reinterment of the remains. Bennion afterward sent a letter to the LDS First Presidency to report on the experience.⁶² Roberts quotes Bennion at some length: "Several years ago 'Young Joseph' [Joseph Smith III] as he was called (president of the Reorganized Church) told me he was going to bring his father's body to Independence and when I went out to Utah to conference I told President Joseph F. Smith, and President Smith said to me: 'You tell Joseph not to disturb those bodies without letting me know.'"⁶³ While the section quoted by Roberts demonstrates that Joseph F. Smith believed the

Old Mystery Cleared Up," *Quincy Herald-Whig*, January 22, 1928, 3.

⁶⁰Fillerup, "Musings on the Burial of the Bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith."

⁶¹Hands, "To the Officers," 1.

⁶²Samuel O. Bennion, Letter to President Heber J. Grant and Counselors, January 21, 1928, M270.2 B4728L 19-, LDS Church History Library; Albert L. Childers, "An Account of the Reinterment of the Remains of Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith and Emma Smith," 1958, MS 3806, LDS Church History Library.

⁶³B. H. Roberts, "Statement by Assistant Church Historian B. H. Roberts," in Joseph Fielding Smith, "Truth Told Regarding Prophet's Burial

bodies were still in Nauvoo, the very next (and unquoted) line of Bennion's letter reads, "and ever since that time I have been personally sure that the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were buried in Nauvoo and not taken from there *as it is so commonly reported in our church.*"⁶⁴ Bennion's description acknowledges that rumors of the bodies being taken to Utah were "commonly reported," at least among the LDS rank and file. It took Joseph F. Smith's comments to assure him entirely that such tales were untrue.

In his Sunstone presentation, Robert Fillerup mentions more recent anecdotal examples of folklore circulating in Utah that allegedly claim that the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were interred in Temple Square. In at least one version, the bodies were placed under the two statues of Joseph and Hyrum that stand on the south side of the Salt Lake Temple today. Other versions apparently position the remains under or inside the temple itself.⁶⁵ And in 1982, Robert E. Wells of the LDS First Quorum of the Seventy recounted in his general conference address that he was startled to hear a non-Mormon tell him that he believed the Salt Lake Temple was a shrine at the site of Joseph Smith's grave.⁶⁶

I find it unlikely that the bodies, if they were taken to Utah, are underneath the statues of Joseph and Hyrum on Temple Square. The statues were placed in their current locations on June 27, 1911, the anniversary of the brothers' assassinations.⁶⁷ The making of the statues seems to have been spurred by a resolution that was adopted at the April 1904 LDS General Conference. There is mention in the proceedings of several sites on or near Temple Square that had been discussed as possible locations for such a memorial in the past, indicating that it was not tied to any specific spot where the bodies of Joseph

Place," *Deseret News*, January 31, 1928, Sect. 2, p. 6.

⁶⁴Bennion, Letter to President Heber J. Grant and Counselors, 3; emphasis mine.

⁶⁵Fillerup, "Musings on the Burial of the Bodies of Joseph and Hyrum Smith"; Bernauer, "Still 'Side by Side,'" 32.

⁶⁶Wells, "Be a Friend, a Servant, a Son of the Savior," *Ensign*, October 1982, www.lds.org/general-conference/1982/10/be-a-friend-a-servant-a-son-of-the-savior?lang=eng (accessed February 8, 2013).

⁶⁷Journal History, June 27, 1911, 4–5, 13.

and Hyrum were already interred.⁶⁸

In late July of 2012, I asked one permanent staff member of Temple Square and several pairs of sister missionaries that conduct tours whether any visitor during their tenures had suggested that the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were interred somewhere in the immediate vicinity. They all responded in the negative. Even more recently, however, I discussed the topic with a former LDS Institute instructor who revealed his belief that the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum actually *are* in Salt Lake or that they may once have been. Thus, at least some LDS Church members today, though it may be a small minority, find some credibility in the story that Joseph and Hyrum's remains were brought to Utah.

Assuming, however, that the bodies remained in Nauvoo, where were they located? In August of 1927, W. O. Hands traveled to Nauvoo with RLDS President Fred M. Smith to investigate further.⁶⁹ They apparently made the decision on that trip to attempt exhumations of Joseph and Hyrum to explore whether family memory regarding the graves' location was accurate. After the bodies were found early the next year, President Smith explained the two main reasons for the search: (1) to put to rest "rumors as to their whereabouts," presumably including rumors that the bodies were taken to Utah, and (2) to erect a monument on the exact spot where the remains lie, which was apparently an important goal.⁷⁰ Certainly, the rising water was also a factor, considering that it had been a concern of the monument committee for years and that the first location in which the search team dug in 1928 was very near the water line. Regardless, pre-1928 corre-

⁶⁸"Memorial to the Prophet Joseph and Patriarch Hyrum," *Elders' Journal* 1, no. 10, May 1904, 125-27.

⁶⁹Alton, "A History of the Smith Family Cemetery," 21-22. Bernauer (Hands's granddaughter), "Still 'Side by Side,'" 24, is unsure that this trip occurred. Alton gives no specific documentation on her version. She states that, at this point, "Frederick gave the okay to begin digging in search of secret graves." It seems quite clear from W. O. Hands's recollections that he and President Fred Smith traveled to Nauvoo together in August of 1927, so his account seems to confirm Alton's retelling of the events. Hands, "To the Officers," 1.

⁷⁰Frederick M. Smith, "Bodies of the Martyrs Located," *Saints' Herald* 75, no. 4 (January 25, 1928): 90. See also Tuffli, "Joseph and Hyrum Smith Graves Found in Nauvoo," 3; Bernauer, "Still 'Side by Side,'" 24 note 38.

spondence between Hands and RLDS Church leaders as well as notes written by Hands to document a meeting with Fred M. Smith on December 30, 1927, contain no indication that Emma's remains would be sought.⁷¹

Yet in January of 1928, after Hands and his team had trenched for several days to no avail in the spot where they thought the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum were interred, they turned to Emma's "crypt," to use Hands's label, which they believed marked her place of burial. They thus moved a few dozen feet north and up the slight slope overlooking the Mississippi.

EMMA'S CENOTAPH AND THE MORTAL REMAINS

At some point within a few years of Emma's death in 1879, a brick vault with a slanted marble slab laid across the top was constructed above ground as a memorial to her.⁷² It was this structure that Hands referred to as a "crypt." According to one tradition, Emma had requested that she be buried in a specific location that was thought to be near Joseph's secret grave.⁷³ Hands's team thus decided to first search for Emma and then to trench around her burial plot for Joseph and Hyrum. They found, however, that Emma was not under-

⁷¹See contents of P63 f11, Community of Christ Library-Archives, including "A Meeting in President Smiths [sic] office," December 30, 1927. I have found only one explicit mention stating that there was no intention on anyone's part to move Emma's remains prior to Hands's 1928 trip to Nauvoo. James Page, RLDS caretaker of Nauvoo's historic sites in the late 1930s and for some time afterward, explained on his tours that there "was no plan to move her [i.e., Emma's] body until workmen found it by accident." James Page, Untitled Nauvoo Tour Guide Script, [#1], 2, R16 f21, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

⁷²Lachlan Mackay, "A Brief History," 244, notes: "Joseph Smith III made arrangements to mark Emma's grave in the days immediately following her funeral." *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III (1832-1914)*, 186, corroborate that, after his mother's funeral, "I remained in the city [Nauvoo] long enough to arrange for a stone to mark her resting place." This seems to indicate that a stone was installed soon after her death. Nonetheless, as I discuss below, I believe that no marker was placed until significantly later.

⁷³Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 305; Hands, "To the Officers," 2. Bernauer, "Still 'Side by Side,'" 20, cites Newell and Avery on this tradition regarding the location of Emma and Joseph's graves. She describes the

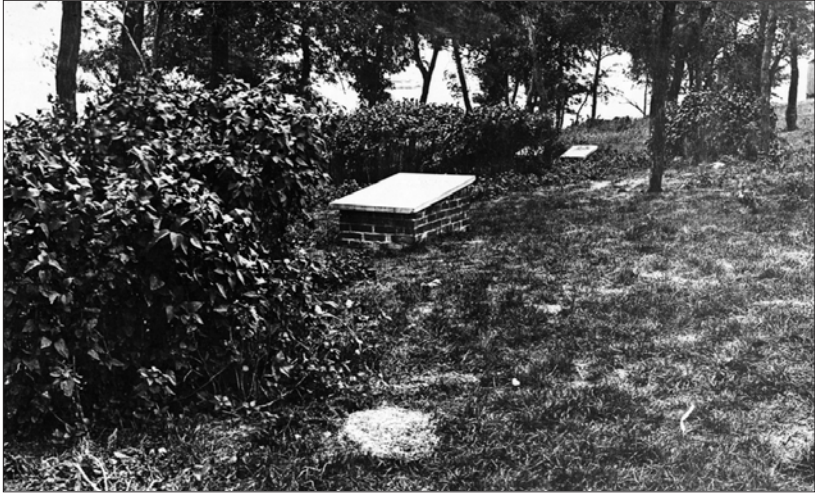
neath the vault, meaning that the monument was, in fact, a cenotaph. Gina Alton explains that two speculative theories developed in future years. Some believed that “the marker was placed at a later date and her exact burial place was forgotten. Others felt that perhaps family members were still keeping a secret.”⁷⁴

Hoping that Emma’s body might be nearby, Hands’s team began trenching to the east. Fewer than three feet away, they located and identified Emma’s remains. Continuing from there, they dug south, “but we found nothing except the grave of [Lewis] Bidamon, which lay immediately south of the ‘Emma’ crypt.”⁷⁵ After several more days of frustrated digging, Hands felt inspired to have a trench dug in

source as “undocumented.” Newell and Avery do, however, cite a January 31, 1928, *Deseret News* issue (see 366 note 2) but fail to mention a page number or article title. I assume from the note following that their source is, in fact, Joseph Fielding Smith, “Truth Told Regarding Prophet’s Burial Place.” Alton, “A History of the Smith Family Cemetery,” 23, also mentions the tradition but gives no source. “Interview of Mrs. Catherine [sic] Salisbury, 1891,” May 16, 1891, *Carthage Republican*, 2, MS 7997-2, LDS Church History Library, included comments from Katharine’s son, Fred. A pall bearer at her funeral with other nephews, he said: “We buried Aunt Emma by the side of the prophet. Of course there can be nothing left of the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum but dust.” Thus, at least one person with living memory of the event indicates that some of those who laid Emma to rest believed they were interring her beside Joseph. There is no mention of whether this was at Emma’s request. It seems that those involved, perhaps because they were all Smith relatives, had some knowledge of the location of Joseph and Hyrum’s bodies. Fred’s general description (“by the side of”) is vague and does not reveal whether such knowledge was common in the family or whether Emma specifically provided it to her nephews (or others at her deathbed) so that she could be buried close to Joseph.

⁷⁴Alton, “A History of the Smith Family Cemetery,” 23. I find the first theory more likely. If J.W. Wight’s comments on the state of the location in 1900 are any indication of its appearance during previous years and those immediately following, Emma’s grave was likely overgrown with vegetation during the late nineteenth century and into the early years of the twentieth. See Wight, quoted in Bernauer, “Still ‘Side by Side,’” 20. It would be easy to forget the exact location of the place of burial under those circumstances. I discuss below further reasons why the first theory outlined by Alton seems more likely.

⁷⁵Hands, “To the Officers,” 2.



Cenotaph of “Emma Smith Bidamon” in center. The monument was erected after Emma’s death and stood until 1928 inside the boundary of what is today called the “Smith Family Cemetery” at the Joseph Smith Historic Site in Nauvoo. Courtesy Community of Christ Archives.

an untouched area a few feet from the site of Emma’s interment. There, the team encountered a foundation wall that, according to Smith family tradition, matched the one in which the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum had been hidden. Within, they found the partial remains—even much of the bone structure had decomposed—of two skeletons that they identified as those of the Smith brothers.⁷⁶

It was after the fortuitous discovery of Emma and the subsequent unearthing of Joseph and Hyrum that the decision was made to exhume all three bodies and to reinter them side by side. The day the Smith brothers’ skeletal remains were found, W. O. Hands telegraphed the news to Fred M. in Independence.⁷⁷ On the day following, Hands telegraphed again to confirm the find, indicating that, “we

⁷⁶Ibid., 2–3.

⁷⁷Though I do not have a copy of the telegraph, Fred M. Smith’s journal for January 16, 1928, acknowledges its receipt, confirming the finding of the “bodies of Jos. & Hy.” On January 20, he attended the “ceremonies over remains Jos. Hy. & Emma.”



The three stone markers placed above the reinterred bodies of Hyrum, Joseph, and Emma in 1928. Today, they are on display in the museum of the Joseph Smith Historic Site Visitors Center. 2011. Photo by Lee Wiles, courtesy Community of Christ.

here all think Emma should be placed beside Joseph.”⁷⁸ The local townspeople, he wrote, “give us every help possible they [sic] speak in the highest terms of Joseph & Hyrum and when the[y] speak of Emma it is with feeling. they [sic] remember her as ‘Aunt Emma’ and state many incidents that exhibit their esteem of her.”⁷⁹

Hands later explained that, when Fred M. arrived in Nauvoo on January 19, he and his party approved the location and design of a new memorial that would “contain the remains of not only Joseph and Hyrum, but Emma, it being the opinion of the Nauvoo Saints and the general church officials that the sacrifice which she made before

⁷⁸W. O. Hands, Letter to [RLDS] Presidency and Bishopric, January 17, 1928, R63 f11, Community of Christ Library-Archives. Bernauer also quotes this passage in “Still ‘Side by Side,’” 29.

⁷⁹Hands, Letter to [RLDS] Presidency and Bishopric, January 17, 1928.

and after the death of her husband entitled her to the same respect that was shown the martyrs.”⁸⁰ Thus, the three bodies were disinterred and placed in adjacent wood boxes, which were then encased in concrete into which three marble markers were embedded, each placed directly above one of the bodies. Names and titles for the deceased individuals were etched into their respective marble slabs: Hyrum “The Patriarch,” Joseph “The Prophet,” and Emma “Wife of Joseph Smith.” The new concrete base was to serve as a foundation for a larger monument that, according to a source in Nauvoo who was likely reporting the words of Fred M. Smith, would “be a landmark visible for miles up and down the Mississippi River between Keokuk and Fort Madison.”⁸¹

The removal of Emma from the grave in which she had lain for almost fifty years and her subsequent entombment beside Joseph could be explained simply by reference to predominant trends of American burial in the early twentieth century by which spouses were laid to rest and memorialized side-by-side in a fashion identical to today’s custom. It is typical, after all, for kin to be situated near one another within cemeteries and burial grounds, with bonds of marriage receiving primacy above other relationships. It is, in fact, this tradition that establishes the performative frame in which Joseph and Emma’s positioning and memorialization in 1928 is easily and seemingly naturally legible as signifying their bonds as husband and wife, even without descriptive text.

Yet this specific interment and memorialization occurred at the nexus of a religious struggle over Joseph Smith’s teachings and practices regarding plural marriage and is imbued with public meanings that transcend their significance as part of broader trends by which specific families symbolize the relationship between dead spouses by

⁸⁰Hands, “To the Officers,” 4.

⁸¹“Nauvoo, Illinois,” *Saints’ Herald*, February 1, 1928. I do not believe that President Fred M. Smith wrote the quotation. The author was likely paraphrasing from a statement Fred M. made at the time of the reinterments. The International News Service ran a story at the time indicating that Fred M. had announced that “a vast monument was to be erected over the site of the graves, which may be seen for miles around because of its advantageous position overlooking the Mississippi.” International News Service, “Bodies of Joseph Smith, Kin Found on Prairie,” 1928, M270.2 I612b 1928, LDS Church History Library.

burying them side by side. The movement of Emma and Joseph's remains and their memorialization in 1928 facilitated the emergence of Joseph's dead body as situated in a monogamous marriage with Emma, to be gazed upon primarily by members of Latter Day Saint churches, in the midst of competing narratives regarding the extent to which their relationship was exclusive. Furthermore, Joseph's placement next to Hyrum signifies their role as martyrs, since it is common knowledge among adherents of Latter Day Saint churches that Joseph and Hyrum died together in an event known as "the martyrdom." The narrative of the event plays an important role in Latter Day Saints' memories of their early history. In fact, W. O. Hands's designs for the memorial included the unused label "the martyr."⁸² Positioning Emma within the memorial to the martyrs gives the impression that she, also, was a martyr for the movement. In the RLDS Church at the time, public memory of her role was one of an anti-polygamy crusader. That fact, in addition to her placement next to Joseph, concretized in a material form the exclusiveness of her relationship with Joseph and her role as a martyr in the crusade against polygamy, equal in status and allied with her husband, Joseph, and his brother, Hyrum, allowing Emma to continue her anti-polygamy campaign from the grave. As an RLDS writer once described her, quoting the New Testament, she was "dead yet speaketh."⁸³

The relative safety of revealing the burial location of Joseph and Hyrum that Joseph Smith III acknowledged in 1900 made possible the emergence in 1928 of a physical object directly indexing⁸⁴ the location of Joseph and Emma's bodies in which they could be gazed upon by different publics as a monogamous couple: Emma to be gazed upon as Joseph's wife and Joseph as her husband. The original plans for the monument, sans Emma, incorporated conceptually the emergence of Joseph and Hyrum as dead bodies that could finally be recognized as respected public leaders after a long period of ignominious hiding; but that concept, while not fully supplanted, was made supplemental to Joseph's emergence from hiding to be gazed

⁸²Bernauer, "Still 'Side by Side,'" 25.

⁸³*The History of the Reorganized Church*, 4:267.

⁸⁴In using "index" and "indexing," I am drawing on the semiotician Charles Peirce's typology of signs. For an overview, see Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2002), 36–37.

upon as a truly monogamous public figure, a representation of Joseph that stood in contrast to teachings of the nineteenth-century LDS Church.⁸⁵

I am drawing somewhat above and in what follows on Judith Butler's theory of performativity to emphasize that the symbolism or meaning inscribed in graves is not a feature that is wholly installed at some original point, such as the day the tombstone is selected by the family/consumer, when the tombstone is chiseled, or when it is placed. To quote Butler, "What is signified as an identity [in this case, the identity inscribed in and on a certain type of memorial and arrangement of bodies] is not signified at a given point in time after which it is simply there as an inert piece of entitative language."⁸⁶ Rather, signification or inscription that appears concretized actually emerges through repetition or reiteration across a linguistic, material, and social field. She writes, "Construction not only takes place *in* time, but is itself a temporal process which operates through the reiteration of norms."⁸⁷ Identity only occurs in practice in acts of identification. Thus, identity always emerges relationally, always legible only through its (always slightly different) repetitiveness across the social and linguistic field. This repetitional basis for identity provides space for substantive change in the slippages that always occur in greater or lesser degrees between performances that are recognized as performatively similar. Butler's concept of "materialization," as explained in *Bodies that Matter*, may also be useful for understanding some of the

⁸⁵It is immaterial to the semiotic expression of the positioning of the bodies and their memorialization that (1) it would have been impractical for the dead bodies of the other women who were married to Joseph during his life to have been transported from Utah to Illinois to be buried beside him or that (2) the Smith family almost certainly would have denied requests to bury these women in the vicinity of Joseph's body. For the vast majority of visitors, the exclusion of these women does not signify the impracticalities of their interment in Nauvoo. Their exclusion, rather, is symbolic in the form of their effacement. In other words, their absence just does not cross the minds of most visitors; they are not thought of.

⁸⁶Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 197.

⁸⁷Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 10.

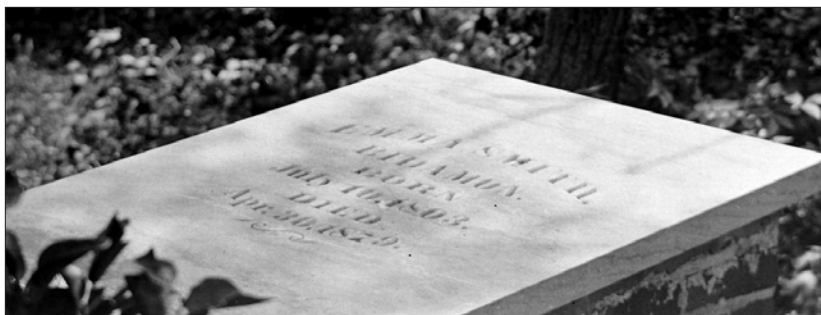
theoretical underpinnings of this project.⁸⁸ All this is not to say that I believe intentional design, such as the design of a memorial, is insignificant and has no role to play in shaping future interpretation or meaning. Yet design alone is never sufficient for the establishment of identity—the way something is persistently perceived in the world. It is one element among many from which meaning and identity emerges interactively in the flow of practice. In translating Butler’s theories into a form that makes them useful for understanding the social situatedness of non-living objects, I am also borrowing loosely from Bruno Latour and his formulations of Actor-Network Theory.⁸⁹

REALIGNING EMMA

The enablement of the gaze described above required the twin symbolic gestures of effacing Emma’s marriage to her second husband, Lewis Bidamon, and connecting her exclusively with Joseph Smith. That these gestures seemed natural and unproblematic to those who performed them demonstrates the extent to which the significance of Emma’s life was reduced to (1) her status as Joseph’s wife, (2) her status as Joseph’s *only* wife, and (3) her relevance to other projects of importance to the Latter Day Saint movement, most importantly antipolygamy advocacy. The first requirement of appropriating Emma for these purposes was erasing or marginalizing Bidamon. As mentioned above, Emma was known by several names in later life, but the name etched into the marble slab on the cenotaph monument placed soon after her death read “Emma Smith Bidamon,” reflecting her successive marriages to Joseph Smith and Lewis Bidamon. Major Bidamon was, after all, married to Emma for more than thirty years and helped raise Joseph’s biological children. Lewis was also a well-known figure in and around Nauvoo. Thus, Emma’s stone bore his

⁸⁸See Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 183–203; Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, ix–xii, 1–16. Butler never applied her theory to memorials—or to my knowledge any object that cannot have its own subjectivity—but I think it works well to describe the process through which stylized norms of memorials become recognizable as having certain kinds of symbolic meanings or identities.

⁸⁹Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2005); Graham Harman, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* (Melbourne, Australia: Re.press, 2009).



The stone that sat atop Emma’s cenotaph. This side of the stone was embedded into concrete in 1928 and is not on display in the museum of the Joseph Smith Historic Site Visitors Center. On the verso is the text that memorialized the new resting places of Hyrum, Joseph, and Emma in 1928. Courtesy Community of Christ Archives.

surname. In 1928 when Hands reinterred Emma, Joseph, and Hyrum, however, the three marble slabs he placed above them were made from the marble of Emma’s cenotaph. The marble had been lifted from its brick base, flipped, cut into three pieces, etched with new text, and embedded into the concrete of the monument to the martyrs. Thus, the materialized connection to Lewis Bidamon that had literally been carved in stone as part of Emma’s original memorial was fragmented and buried in concrete. The description of Emma on her new monument—“Emma Wife of Joseph Smith”—omitted her ties to Lewis and, in fact, made her relevance to the new monument—and as a personality in general—contingent on her marriage bonds with Joseph.

The symbolic distancing of Emma from Lewis Bidamon had actually begun years earlier. In fact, it was this distancing that predisposed those involved in the 1928 reinterments to make the notably spontaneous decision to efface Emma’s ties to Bidamon on the new monument, a judgment made seemingly without any reservations or concern for Bidamon’s role in Emma’s life, as though it were the only reasonable step after the discovery of Emma’s remains. Tendencies to dismiss Lewis Bidamon are notable across the historic record. “For the most part,” write Newell and Avery, “RLDS historians and writers have ignored Lewis Bidamon’s existence. Among LDS writers, vilification of Lewis Bidamon easily became a subtle means of establishing that some-



Close-up image of the text that appeared on the stone slab that rested atop Emma Smith Bidamon's cenotaph until 1928 when it was removed, flipped, and cut into the three pieces that were then used to mark the places of Hyrum, Joseph, and Emma's reinterments. The photo was taken prior to the dismantling of the cenotaph. Courtesy Community of Christ Archives.

thing must have been wrong with Emma Smith.”⁹⁰ Already in Forscutt’s commemorative discourse, which, as described above, was delivered just a few weeks after Emma’s death, RLDS memory was conforming to a pattern in which Lewis Bidamon’s thirty-two-plus years of marriage to Emma were overshadowed by her sixteen years with Joseph. Forscutt comments at length on Emma and Joseph’s relationship and their shared ordeals, dedicating only a few comments to Major Bidamon.⁹¹ And in 1903, Alexander Smith, Emma and Joseph’s son, who was later Patriarch of the RLDS Church, wrote a now well-known recollection of his experience at his mother’s deathbed. Major Bidamon appears only briefly in the account as rather dismissive of his wife’s illness. Emma, nonetheless, was soon to die. Alexander was by her side

⁹⁰Newell and Avery, *Mormon Enigma*, 306–7.

⁹¹Forscutt, “Commemorative Discourse.”

when she reached into the air and called “Joseph, Joseph” before passing away. Though Alexander at first thought Emma was calling for his brother, Joseph III, he learned later about a vision Emma had shortly before her death regarding her reunion with her martyred husband. Alexander was then sure his mother had been calling for his long-deceased father, eager to be rejoined with him.⁹² This narrative became a standard account of Emma’s death.

Even in W. O. Hands’s description of his unearthing of Bidamon’s body, he shows no enthusiasm, writing that “we found nothing except the grave of [Lewis] Bidamon,”⁹³ as though it was simply a stumbling block to more worthy discoveries. When Emma’s body was located in 1928, it was only three or four feet from Bidamon, and his body was buried immediately adjacent to Emma’s cenotaph. Bidamon passed away in 1891, and it seems reasonable that it was someone’s intention to bury him next to the woman with whom he had spent much of his adult life. Regardless, such implied wishes were ignored. The location of Emma’s burial was *only* interpreted in 1928 as expressive of an intent to inter her as close as possible to Joseph, this despite the fact that Bidamon’s body was buried in closer proximity to Emma’s in 1891 than hers was to Joseph in 1879. Whatever Bidamon’s wishes or those of the people who buried him may have been, they were entirely ignored.

This is not to say that Emma did not desire to be buried close to Joseph. One tradition of oral knowledge attested that she did have such a desire. It is also not to say that those who interred Emma, whether inspired by her wishes or not, did not purposefully bury her remains close to Joseph’s body. When Fred Salisbury was interviewed in 1891, he confirms that at least some family members did have such a goal in mind: “Five of we boys, Fred, Solomon, Don, and Alvin Salis[bury] and Don Millikin, all her nephews, acted as pall bearers at her funeral. We buried Aunt Emma by the side of the prophet.”⁹⁴ None of these claims, however, gives reason to assume that Emma would not also have desired that her second husband be interred close to her at the time of his passing or that she would not have wanted to be memorialized with his surname. Such assump-

⁹²Alexander Smith, “Second Coming of Christ: The Home of the Redeemed,” *Zion’s Ensign* 14 (December 31, 1903): 4–7.

⁹³Hands, “To the Officers,” 2.

⁹⁴“Interview of Mrs. Catherine [sic] Salisbury, 1891,” 2.

tions depended on the symbolic distancing of Emma from Lewis described above.

It is more than plausible that Joseph Smith III himself chose the location of Bidamon's interment. There are hints in Joseph Smith III's memoirs that he and the Major developed a closer bond after the passing of his mother.⁹⁵ And on February 21, 1891, the *Saints' Herald* reported that Joseph left Independence for Nauvoo to attend his stepfather's funeral.⁹⁶ In Nauvoo, a local newspaper described the scene: "Joseph Smith, stepson of the deceased . . . conducted the funeral services, and preached an eloquent sermon. . . . A large concourse of people followed the remains to the grave, where a benediction was offered by Jos. Smith, and the remains of a once good-natured, kind-hearted man were hidden from view 'forever and aye.'"⁹⁷ In speaking of Bidamon's funeral in his memoirs, Joseph Smith III does not comment on who selected the spot where the Major would be buried; but if Joseph had had any objection, certainly the burial would not have occurred there. That Joseph had some influence over deciding the exact location of Bidamon's grave—which is almost certainly the case, considering that he owned the property at the time and that he played a significant role in Lewis's funeral⁹⁸—lends some credence to the argument that Emma's monument was built on the spot where the family thought Emma was actually buried rather than deliberately in a location several feet from her remains to deceive those who might want to desecrate her grave. The burial of Lewis's body beside Emma's marker seems to indicate that Joseph intended to lay his stepfather to rest next to his mother. If Joseph had known Emma was not actually interred beneath the monument, it seems unlikely that he would have buried his stepfather directly beside it rather than at a location that was truly adjacent to his mother's remains. If we assume that Joseph knew his mother was actually interred several feet away, we would have to conclude that he was still fully engaged in the subterfuge of keeping the location of his mother's remains a secret in 1891, even

⁹⁵*The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, 304–6.

⁹⁶"Editorial Items," *Saints' Herald* 38, no. 8 (February 21, 1891): 117.

⁹⁷"The Remains of Major Bidamon Laid to Rest Last Sunday—Other Facts," *Nauvoo Independent* 18, no. 18 (February 20, 1891): page number not visible on my scan.

though just nine years later he thought it was safe to reveal the location of his father's and uncle's graves. Even if Joseph III knew that Emma was not buried beneath the monument dedicated to her, he still had influence in determining whether the Major would be buried beside his mother's memorial. As Joseph Smith III gave the graveside benediction, the large number of people who accompanied him to the burying ground witnessed this public acknowledgment of the bonds between Emma and the Major. The interpretations above, of course, assume that Emma's monument was placed before Bidamon's burial.

Alternatively, persuasive evidence suggests that Emma's vault was constructed at Joseph III's request soon after Bidamon's death in 1891. Joseph Smith III's entry indicating that he stayed in Nauvoo after his mother's death in 1879 long enough to "arrange" for a stone marking her place of burial leaves a factual inconsistency in the historical record that is difficult to reconcile with other pieces of evidence and later speculations regarding the placement of Emma's vault.⁹⁹ Certainly, those who speculated in the ways described by Gina Alton about the reason Emma's vault was not placed over her body must have assumed that the marker was installed long enough after her death that the place of her burial was no longer obvious to observers. To summarize, Alton explains that, after 1928, two speculative theories developed. Some believed that "the marker was placed at a later date and her exact burial place was forgotten. Others felt that perhaps family members were still keeping a secret."¹⁰⁰ For either theory to be accurate, Emma's grave must have been disguised by the settling of the ground and the growth of vegetation.

If a marker was installed in 1879 as Joseph Smith III's memoirs appear to indicate, it would make no sense that the family would place the monument several feet away in an attempt to hide Emma's grave as the surface over it would still have been bare and the attempt at deception would have been obvious to any passerby. But if a marker was installed years later, after the family had forgotten Emma's exact place of burial, then the memorial Joseph Smith III arranged for in 1879 probably did not materialize. I am most persuaded by the first of the two theories Alton mentions. I do not believe a marker was placed for Emma in 1879.

⁹⁹*The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, 186.

¹⁰⁰Alton, "A History of the Smith Family Cemetery," 23.

An 1880 letter shows what appears at first glance to be Joseph's dissatisfaction with the lettering on his mother's marker. In a letter to T. Revell on July 2, Joseph III wrote, "What did you write was the measurement of the marble slab it would take to cover those awkward letters on Emma's grave stone[?]"¹⁰¹ The passage, however, is probably referring to the stone placed for his first wife, Emmeline, who also went by the name "Emma" and who was buried in the family cemetery in 1869. It was not characteristic of Joseph to refer to his mother by her first name; references to her were more commonly phrased as "my mother" or, on formal public occasions, "Sister Emma." If the letter is about his mother's stone, it indicates that a marker was placed for her in 1879 or early 1880. On the other hand, if it is about Emmeline, it leaves open the question of whether the stone that Joseph III "arranged" to have placed for his mother was ever installed at all.

The only record I can find that clearly mentions work on the memorial of Joseph Smith III's mother is from 1891, just a few months after Major Bidamon's death. This is the most convincing piece of evidence about when, exactly, Emma's tomb was constructed. Joseph III received an invoice from Lewis Hudson in June of 1891, itemizing expenses for Hudson's work on Joseph's "mother's grave." One item is "Tearing down & cleaning Brick." Emma's vault had a brick base, so it may be that the vault was only constructed in 1891. It seems feasible that the brick may have been taken from one of the nearby brick buildings still standing from the city's heyday but which had long been scavenged for building materials by later Nauvoo citizens, hence the reference to "tearing down and cleaning brick." The brick may have even come from Joseph's old brick store, which once stood nearby and was dismantled in 1890, though there is no evidence to support this speculation.

It may be posited that "tearing down and cleaning" refers to a refurbishing of Emma's vault. In this case, it was already in place when Major Bidamon was buried. It may also be the case that the vault was moved in 1891 to the spot where it sat when it was dismantled in 1928, in which case Joseph Smith III was making a decision to place his mother's public marker beside what would have still been the bare ground of Major Bidamon's grave. Another charge on the invoice—and by far the most costly—for the "Bal[ance] on tomb-

¹⁰¹Joseph Smith III, Letter to T. Revell, July 2, 1880, Letter Press Book 1, 206, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

stone” indicates, however, that the stone placed atop the brick base was also purchased in 1891. If the charge is for the slab that sat atop Emma’s vault, which is the way I interpret the notation, then it seems likely that the monument was constructed from scratch in 1891. If, furthermore, a previous marker did not exist, then the family had probably forgotten the exact location of Emma’s burial and decided to build the new monument next to Bidamon’s grave, inscribing it with the name “Emma Smith Bidamon” at that time. This possibility is supported by another item on Hudson’s invoice: a charge for “Masons Work.”¹⁰²

In summation, I find it most likely given the available evidence that the first marker built for Emma Smith Bidamon was the brick and marble vault constructed in 1891. For some reason, the stone Joseph Smith III arranged for in 1879 was not installed. Or, if it was, it had disappeared somehow by 1891, leaving behind no trace of where it had formerly stood, though I find this possibility unlikely. It is also noteworthy that I have tried unsuccessfully in the Community of Christ Library-Archives and in the LDS Church History Library to locate a photograph of Emma’s grave that was conclusively taken before 1891. One additional piece of evidence that lends some small support to my conclusion comes from Goudy Hogan—an LDS missionary returning home from Norway—who mentions in his journal on August 25, 1880, that he visited Nauvoo, staying with Major Bidamon while there. He notes that Emma had been dead for a year but does not mention any monument to her.¹⁰³

Regardless of whether Emma’s marker was placed before or after Major Bidamon’s death, Joseph Smith III was showing his respect for Lewis as a family member by requesting permission from the city to inter him in the private Smith burying ground rather than placing his body in the city cemetery, as was typically required in Nauvoo at the time.¹⁰⁴ Whether Joseph had his stepfather’s remains placed next to Emma’s marker or had Emma’s marker constructed beside the bare ground of Lewis’s grave, he seems to have been expressing a

¹⁰²Lewis Hudson, Letter to Joseph Smith III, June 2, 1891, P15 f17, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

¹⁰³Goudy Hogan, Journal, August 25, 1880, MS 15092, LDS Church History Library.

¹⁰⁴For the ordinance requiring that bodies be buried in the city cemetery, see *The Memoirs of President Joseph Smith III*, 187.

desire to symbolize the connection his mother and Major Bidamon shared in life, especially considering that the memorial bore both the Smith and Bidamon surnames. If the intentions behind the display are interpreted here at all accurately, they were totally ignored in 1928.

Even today, Lewis Bidamon's grave remains unmarked, though that is not atypical for the Smith family burying ground. What seems more peculiar, however, is that, on a plaque near the center of the cemetery that is embossed with the names of Smith family members and friends, all of whom were interred there after Joseph and Hyrum's secret burial, Lewis is listed near the bottom as an "other," meaning nonrelative. This placement ignores that he was husband to Emma and stepfather to her children and that she was stepmother to his.

The second symbolic gesture required for the enablement of the gaze in which Joseph and Emma's bodies could be viewed through their memorial as truly monogamous public figures was one through which Emma could be exclusively tied to Joseph Smith. The means by which this was done in the material form of the monument have already been discussed. Yet grander plans were in store to make the monogamy-promoting theme of the monument more explicit. In an editorial written by RLDS President Fred M. Smith just a few days after he returned from Nauvoo in 1928, he explained: "In searching for the bodies of Joseph and Hyrum, that of Emma was found, and it was thought that her remains should be placed beside those of the man by whose side she worked and whose body she so faithfully guarded through the years, and *whose sole wife she was*."¹⁰⁵ It seems that, around this same time, President Smith began conceiving plans for the grand monument to the martyrs that RLDS leaders hoped to erect on the concrete foundation laid at the site of Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma's recent reinterment. Among Fred M. Smith's papers is handwritten text that appears to be for the monument. The text reads, "Here below in crypts of artificial stone are the remains of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, brothers in the flesh and workers together in life, both killed on June 27, 1844. Besides [sic] Joseph are the remains of his faithful *and only wife* Emma, who died on [a dash left for the

¹⁰⁵Frederick M. Smith, "Bodies of the Martyrs Located," 89; emphasis mine.

month and day] 1879.”¹⁰⁶ As Barbara Bernauer noted, “To the RLDS Saints of 1928, securing Emma and Joseph together in concrete was also cementing the affirmation of the Reorganization: that Emma Smith was the one and only wife of Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism.”¹⁰⁷ In fact, President Fred M.’s handwritten notes from the period contain several references to Emma as “the only wife of Joseph.” Though the grand monument as imagined in 1928 never materialized, President Smith’s plans are revealing of the meanings inscribed in the memorial as it took shape in 1928 and the ideological features of the monument as it evolved in subsequent years.

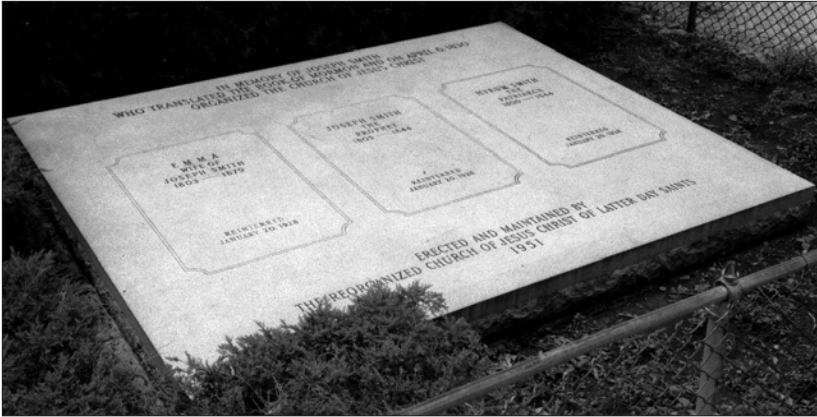
Furthermore, tour guides reinforced these inscribed features in succeeding decades. Tours of the Smith family properties in Nauvoo began at the graves during the tenure of James Page, RLDS caretaker of local historic sites in the late 1930s, early ’40s, and possibly beyond. The first sentence of one script reads, “You are at the Graves of Joseph Smith, his only wife Emma and his Brother Hyrum.”¹⁰⁸ In another script, perhaps written at a later time, Page goes into more detail concerning Joseph’s monogamy. After briefly interpreting the exterior of the Homestead, the first Smith family home in Nauvoo, the guide moved to the graves:

Here are the graves of the martyrs; [sic] Joseph Smith in the centre, his brother who was murdered with him at the right, and his devoted wife at the left. (Here frequently some one says, ‘His first wife’ or ‘which wife?’) in that case we very clearly state, The only wife the man ever had. It is peculiar isn’t it to see how much incorrect information is extant in the world. It is surprisingly strange that people should have been so incorrectly infomed [sic] when Joseph Smith himself [sic] taught clearer on

¹⁰⁶Frederick M. Smith documents, Community of Christ Library-Archives; emphasis mine. The quoted document was almost certainly written by President Smith, though I cannot be entirely sure, since it is not signed. Other pages in the same stack of documents are signed by President Smith, are in the same handwriting, and were filed in the same folder at the Community of Christ Library-Archives; copies in my possession.

¹⁰⁷Bernauer, “Still ‘Side by Side,’” 29.

¹⁰⁸Page, Untitled Nauvoo Tour Guide Script, [#1], 1.



The stone monument placed in 1951 to memorialize Hyrum, Joseph, and Emma. Courtesy Community of Christ Archives.

Marriage than any man who has ever lived in the history of the world.¹⁰⁹

A lengthy refutation of assertions that Joseph ever taught or practiced plural marriage was presented later in the tour.

On October 25, 1951, the three marble slabs that had been embedded in concrete over Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma's bodies in 1928 were removed, and a single, large granite slab was placed over the top of all three graves. The names and roles of all three interred there remained the same on the new memorial, and thus, the ideological features inscribed in the design of the 1928 monument remained. Additional text was added to describe the purpose and ownership of the monument. "In memory of Joseph Smith," ran the text along the top, "who translated the Book of Mormon and on April 6, 1830 organized the Church of Jesus Christ." On bottom was etched, "erected and maintained by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints 1951."¹¹⁰ Thus, the RLDS Church's control of the bodies was displayed prominently for all visitors to see.

When Fred M. Smith wrote of his aspirations for the new monu-

¹⁰⁹Untitled Nauvoo Tour Guide Script, [#2], 2, R16 f21, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

¹¹⁰"New Granite Markers," *Saints' Herald* 99 (January 14, 1952): 4.

ment in 1928, he “expected that ~~the~~ it will become a place visited by many each year who are interested in history & as a ~~me~~ shrine by those interested in the Church founded by the men ~~who~~ whose remains lie there.”¹¹¹ When, in 1968, W. Wallace Smith, Fred’s brother, commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of the RLDS guide service in Nauvoo, he noted that “nearly 40,000 visitors . . . now tour this center annually.”¹¹² It seemed, thus, that Frederick’s expectations had been fulfilled.

LDS EFFACEMENT OF PLURAL MARRIAGE AND THE RECLAMATION OF EMMA

Whereas RLDS guides in Nauvoo might have continued to believe at the mid-twentieth century that their assertions of the exclusiveness of Joseph and Emma’s marriage were in opposition to active LDS teachings, it is likely that many LDS visitors’ imaginings of Joseph and Emma’s relationship were actually in alignment with those of their RLDS hosts. Whatever interest LDS visitors to Nauvoo in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries might have had in challenging RLDS assertions that Joseph Smith never practiced or taught plural marriage, it had most likely diminished by mid-century, if not already by 1928 when the first memorial to Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma was erected. Much had changed in LDS attitudes toward plural marriage since Eliza R. Snow Smith’s funeral in 1887.¹¹³

In 1890, under immense pressure from the federal government and Protestant activists, LDS President Wilford Woodruff issued the first Manifesto that ostensibly withdrew official support for new plural marriages. In April 1904, President Joseph F. Smith, Hyrum Smith’s son, issued the Second Manifesto. He had recently returned from the unpleasant ordeal of testifying at U.S. Senate committee hearings de-

¹¹¹Frederick M. Smith documents.

¹¹²W. Wallace Smith, “Talk Delivered at the 50th Anniversary Service,” 1.

¹¹³For a rather systematic discussion of changes in the treatment of plural marriage in LDS textual sources and the ways they influenced shifts in Mormon historical consciousness, see Stephen Taysom, “A Uniform and Common Recollection: Joseph Smith’s Legacy, Polygamy, and the Creation of Mormon Public Memory, 1852–2002,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 113–44. Many of Taysom’s findings run parallel to the conclusions I outline here.

signed to decide whether Utah Senator Reed Smoot, a non-polygamous Mormon apostle, would be allowed to keep the U.S. Senate seat to which he had been legally elected. In 1910, Smith “instructed officers of the church to begin enforcing the Second Manifesto by excommunicating or disfellowshipping, at their discretion, all members in violation of the 1904 prohibition of plural marriage.”¹¹⁴

By the 1920s, a new generation of leaders had taken the reins of the LDS Church in the Heber J. Grant administration, and Mormons became tired of and embarrassed by discussions of polygamy. “Some thought the price of abandoning plural marriage and disciplining members who entered it too high,” writes historian Thomas Alexander, “but most considered it little enough in view of the obvious benefits which accrued from a closer harmony to the general attitudes of early twentieth-century America.”¹¹⁵ James E. Talmage and other leaders even redefined the role of marriage in Mormon soteriology to exclude polygamy.¹¹⁶ In 1934 and 1935, the Church excommunicated much of the congregation at Short Creek, Arizona, for its continued insistence on consecrating new plural marriages.¹¹⁷ That congregation would thereafter form the kernel of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (FLDS). The FLDS would subsequently become the polygamy-practicing “Other” on which Mormons could cast the disavowal of their polygamous past without incriminating their own history—a pariah group through which Mormons’ wishes to forget aspects of their own tradition could be redirected as scorn targeted at contemporary human beings. Plural marriage could be reimagined as not part of their own history, but rather as something done by those other people: the FLDS.

By “the middle of the twentieth century, Mormons had revolutionized their own approach to the law of marriage” and were “emerg-

¹¹⁴Kathleen Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 165.

¹¹⁵Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 73.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, 72.

¹¹⁷Ken Driggs, “Twentieth-Century Polygamy and Fundamentalist Mormons in Southern Utah,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 24, no. 4 (1991): 47.

ing as defenders of the traditional [i.e., nuclear, monogamous, heteronormative] family.”¹¹⁸ “With the consistent encouragement of church leaders,” writes sociologist Armand Mauss, “Mormons became models of patriotic, law-abiding citizenship, sometimes seeming to ‘out-American’ all other Americans.”¹¹⁹ One index of the disappearance of plural marriage in Mormon memory is the sharp decline in the frequency in which it appeared in LDS general conference discourses through the mid-twentieth century. Mention of plural marriage had faded from general conference talks almost entirely by the 1950s.¹²⁰ Mormons were eager to put their history of plural marriage behind them. Its practice faded from memory as other features of LDS history were foregrounded and polygamy was marginalized as a significant part of the LDS past.

In many large and small ways, the historical traces of plural marriage were supplanted in LDS memory. The respected historian of Mormonism Davis Bitton noted: “By mid-[twentieth] century the visual representations of Mormon history numbered in the thousands—all contributing to the process of ritualization by establishing a sense of the past that was primarily emotional, appropriable, and not primarily concerned with accuracy. Accurate or inaccurate, it was certainly selective. There are, for example, no marble monuments to polygamy.”¹²¹ To give one additional example, Eliza R. Snow, though still a well-known figure of LDS history, is today never called by the surname she preferred at the end of her life and which is etched into her tombstone, no doubt by her own wishes. Memories of her do not

¹¹⁸Gordon, *The Mormon Question*, 233.

¹¹⁹Armand Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 22.

¹²⁰Inputting the terms “plural marriage” and “polygamy” into Brigham Young University’s “Corpus of LDS General Conference Talks,” corpus.byu.edu/gc (accessed December 2011) reveals a sharp decline in their frequency through the mid-twentieth century. The highest frequency can be seen in the 1880s, the same decade in which Eliza R. Snow Smith passed away, when the system of plural marriage was faced with the greatest external pressure. By the 1950s, the terms disappear almost entirely and occur only sporadically thereafter.

¹²¹Davis Bitton, “The Ritualization of Mormon History” in his *The Ritualization of Mormon History and Other Essays* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 180.

typically include her apologetic rhetoric in favor of polygamy, her disowning of Emma, nor her assertions that she had been a plural wife of Joseph Smith. Instead, she is acclaimed as a strong poet, a talented songwriter, and an organizational leader, all of which are also apt descriptions. But she is remembered only partially and only in ways that are compatible with the projects of the Mormon present.

Also in contrast to the attitudes of late nineteenth-century Mormons, Emma is no longer condemned by the LDS as a denier of her husband's teachings regarding plural marriage. In fact, since at least the mid-twentieth century, she has been valorized as an adoring wife and Joseph has been remembered as a noble and faithful husband. From prominently placed statuary that features Joseph and Emma looking lovingly into each other's eyes to pageantry, such as the live action historical vignette in Nauvoo titled "Letters of Joseph and Emma," to LDS-themed movies, such as *Emma Smith: My Story*, Emma has been salvaged in LDS memory as the epitome of graceful womanliness. She has become an example for all Mormon women to follow.

Stephen Taysom has traced the proliferation among Mormons of depictions of an idealized exclusive, companionate relationship between Emma and Joseph back to the Saints' efforts to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s. The LDS Church sought to furnish an image of Emma as loyal to Joseph in order to provide an example of proper womanly behavior. Emma resurfaced in LDS literature as the "elect lady" following several decades of relative invisibility in Mormon narratives of the Church's history, all of which followed the Saints' explicit condemnations of Emma in the nineteenth century.¹²²

While Joseph's plural marriages, many of which are well documented by reputable scholars,¹²³ are not denied by the LDS Church today, neither are they celebrated nor integrated into official discourse. Knowledge of such marriages has been marginalized in Mor-

¹²²Taysom, "A Uniform and Common Recollection," 137–41.

¹²³See, for example, Compton, *In Sacred Loneliness*; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*. For information on other plural marriages in Nauvoo during Smith's lifetime, see George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy: ". . . but we called it celestial marriage"* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008); Gary James Bergera, "Identifying the Earliest Mormon Polygamists, 1841–44," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 1–74. Much convincing evidence demonstrates that Joseph was a polygamist. Regardless, LDS and RLDS views of and advocacy related to the question of whether Jo-

mon memory and, despite occasional mentions, nearly entirely effaced in LDS presentations of Joseph's life. The fading from memory of the LDS Church's full-throated assertions of Joseph's engagement in plural marriage is not, I believe, an active forgetting but more of a passive forgetting by omission, at least in the way it plays out in most Mormons' lives. The record of such assertions largely disappeared from the LDS record. Thus, knowledge of Joseph's plural marriages and the LDS Church's position regarding them is likely not part of the *active* memory of most LDS visitors to Nauvoo, even if it is sometimes part of their overall store of knowledge. To give an extreme example to illustrate a point, the marginalization of plural marriage in the LDS past is so thorough that some Mormons believe that it was, in fact, the RLDS Church that practiced polygamy while the LDS Church crusaded against it,¹²⁴ an error that would have been unimaginable from the mid-to-late nineteenth century. The LDS Church's long-running opposition to FLDS plural marriage certainly reinforces this historical occlusion.

As this issue was going to typesetting, in the first week of March 2013 the LDS Church announced revisions to the online editions of its scriptures. One significant addition is an introduction to Official Declaration—1, a brief set of texts appended to the LDS Doctrine and Covenants that includes Wilford Woodruff's 1890 Manifesto and re-

seph taught or practiced plural marriage are far more significant to the central strands of the arguments being made here than is the question of whether Joseph actually engaged in polygamy.

¹²⁴This misunderstanding of well-documented history may seem striking to some readers. I know of no study that looks at Mormons' knowledge of the history of plural marriage in their Church, so the number of Mormons who might have similarly erroneous misperceptions is unknown. I have personally conversed with Mormons who make the assertion described here. I have spoken with other researchers who have had the same startling experience. Mormons' knowledge of the history of plural marriage in the Latter-day Saint movement is quite diverse, ranging from expert-level to complete ignorance. This is so, in part, I believe, because of the relative silence on the topic in official LDS Church texts in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries that frame lessons and conversations in Church settings on the men and women who practiced plural marriage. Thus, interpretations and knowledge regarding the history of plural marriage and its practice proliferate outside official discourse.

lated commentary.¹²⁵ The introduction provides some context to the practice of plural marriage in the LDS Church and mentions the federal government's attempts to suppress it. The new passage may be indicative of an openness among at least some Church leaders toward providing in official sources a small amount of information about the practice of LDS plural marriage. Yet the celebratory attitude toward the principle as a core element of the dispensation of the fulness of times that was evident among many nineteenth-century leaders, including several who spoke at Eliza R. Snow Smith's funeral, is totally lacking. Plural marriage is certainly not presented as central to the Restoration or, as John Taylor—at the time an LDS apostle—once described it, a “part of the ‘Everlasting Covenant’ which God has given to man.”¹²⁶ In fact, the opening line of the new introduction to OD-1 reinforces the normativity of monogamy: “The Bible and the Book of Mormon teach that monogamy is God's standard for marriage unless He declares otherwise.”¹²⁷ The practice as instituted in the LDS Church is then historicized and bracketed off as relevant only to a particular time frame between the early 1840s and 1890. Omissions of the enthusiasm with which many nineteenth-century LDS leaders approached the defense of plural marriage in their rhetoric—justifying it on religious, scriptural, social, and naturalistic grounds¹²⁸—may lead LDS readers today to believe that the practice had only tepid support among Mormons of the time or that the LDS of the nineteenth century did not also rely on a range of scriptural passages to support their idealized form of marriage.

Despite its technical accuracy, the closing line of the introduction also has the potential to be misleading. It reads, “This [i.e., the ac-

¹²⁵Joseph Walker, “LDS Church Announces New Scripture Edition,” *Deseret News*, February 28, 2013, www.deseretnews.com/article/865574523/LDS-Church-announces-new-scripture-edition.html (accessed March 7, 2013). Print editions with the revisions should be available in August 2013.

¹²⁶Taylor, quoted in Arrington, *Brigham Young*, 375.

¹²⁷LDS D&C Official Declaration—1. www.lds.org/scriptsures/dc-testament/od/1?lang=eng (accessed March 7, 2013).

¹²⁸See B. Carmon Hardy and Dan Erickson, “Regeneration—Now and Evermore!': Mormon Polygamy and the Physical Rehabilitation of Humankind,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 1 (2001): 40–61; Foster, *Religion and Sexuality*, 201–4.

ceptance of the Manifesto] led to the end of the practice of plural marriage in the Church.”¹²⁹ As discussed above, a great deal more time and effort was required for the practice to finally disappear among the Latter-day Saints. Those already engaged in plural marriages in 1890 commonly continued to recognize their matrimonial bonds, and some LDS Church leaders sanctioned, performed, and personally entered into new plural marriages after the announcement of the Manifesto.¹³⁰ In addition, the Manifesto itself can be seen as a document that “led to” the end of plural marriage only in a retrospective teleological historical framework that assumes the 1890 Manifesto was already the first step in a long series of events over several decades that was destined from its origin to lead to a total cessation of the practice of plural marriage among the Saints. The developments after 1890 that were required in order for the Manifesto to be viewed in this light are elided.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINT RETURN TO NAUVOO

While Mormons had been visiting Nauvoo individually and in groups since the exodus of 1845 and '46, the trickle became a steady stream after 1962 when Nauvoo Restoration, Inc., began to purchase and restore historic properties in order to establish an LDS presence in the old city. This development occurred in tandem with the growth of the heritage industry in the United States as a whole. Nauvoo became a major Mormon tourist destination as the LDS footprint grew over the next few decades. Thousands of Mormons from all over the world visit each year. The north side of Nauvoo's peninsula—the LDS side of town—has become a site of material history at which the many lessons Mormons have learned about their past are supplemented and augmented by their experiences in a zone that is imbued with an enhanced representativeness of that past. Much of the data and analysis that follow come from ethnographic fieldwork I performed for ten weeks during the summer of 2011 as a resident of old Nauvoo. During that time, I was a Historical Fellow and historical interpreter at the Community of Christ's Joseph Smith Historic Site, which manages the property on the southern end of the peninsula, much of which

¹²⁹LDS D&C Official Declaration—1; emphasis mine.

¹³⁰D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 9–105; Flake, *The Politics of American Religious Identity*, 45, 65, 71–73.

previously belonged to the Smith and Bidamon families, including the family cemetery.

Based on my experiences in old Nauvoo, I concluded that Mormons' knowledge of and feel for their history are mediated by the context of the city. The LDS portion of the peninsula features restored and reconstructed period buildings, missionary guides in historic dress, and tour scripts that present faith-promoting corporate and individual narratives set in Nauvoo during its heyday. In Nauvoo, Mormons are induced to feel that they partially access and share in the LDS past in a more direct way than is available through other media, such as books, pamphlets, videos, etc., by which the Church instructs members and nonmembers alike about its history. It is a zone in which Mormons can imagine they touch, see, hear, and participate in the past. At LDS historic sites, visitors hear brief and, by modern historical standards, sanitized narratives of life in Nauvoo from costumed missionary-interpreters. These lessons then build into testimonies in which missionary-interpreters draw connections between their own faith and the lives and struggles of Mormons in Nauvoo of the 1830s and '40s. The residents of old Nauvoo—in the idealized form in which they are presented—are exemplars of the way Mormons today should behave. Mormon visitors are subtly encouraged to live by their example, to replicate their morality, faith, and loyalty, to become like them. As the character of Parley P. Pratt, an important missionary-apostle of the early Church, says near the beginning of the annual and well-attended *Nauvoo Pageant*, "When you're here, we're here."

Though the gravesite of Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma is owned by the RLDS Church, which changed its name to the Community of Christ in 2001, it becomes part of this matrix of knowledge production—a site of materialized punctuation of LDS historical lessons and memory. Community of Christ's emphasis on Joseph and Emma's relationship as it appears in the Smith Family Cemetery—framed in terms of idealized monogamy—is harmonious with the effacement of polygamy in the *Nauvoo Pageant* and at LDS historic sites. When women who were publicly known among late nineteenth-century Mormons as plural wives of Joseph Smith or other Church leaders are discussed or displayed in images in the restored homes and businesses of LDS Nauvoo, their role as plural wives is not mentioned. For example, Sylvia Sessions Lyon is discussed in the tour narrative about the reconstructed "Lyon Drug," and a photograph of her is displayed

there. Her marriage to Joseph, however, is not mentioned. In addition, when characters of women who were plural wives to Joseph appear in the live-action vignettes that accompany the *Nauvoo Pageant*, that aspect of their relationship with Joseph is ignored. The present is far from the days in which these women, such as Eliza R. Snow, whose character appears in at least one vignette,¹³¹ were lauded by Mormons as some of the first women to practice plural marriage in this dispensation. Imagine, for example, how these women might have been depicted in relation to Joseph had the LDS Church been sponsoring Nauvoo pageants in the 1880s.

It is also my experience that LDS missionary-interpreters are typically not able to answer questions about plural marriage in Nauvoo, presumably because such knowledge is not part of their training. Guides who work at Community of Christ sites—some of whom are LDS¹³²—are typically better versed in the history of LDS plural marriage and its practice in Nauvoo than are LDS missionary-interpreters, all of whom are LDS. My experience with Community of Christ guides, however, is limited to one summer in which a single cohort of summer fellows and interns worked with a permanent staff and seasonal volunteers. I have visited Nauvoo several times in the last few years, however, and have found LDS missionary-interpreters' knowledge of the history of plural marriage to be consistently poor. Several LDS guides were averse to discussing the topic at all, even when it was raised in a sensitive manner.

In addition, I observed as a historical interpreter employed by

¹³¹The vignette is called "Women of Nauvoo" and is performed in the Relief Society Garden of the Historic Nauvoo Visitors' Center.

¹³²Though the management of Community of Christ historic sites is composed of adherents, it is not the Church's policy to only hire internally. This often surprises LDS visitors who assume that the Community of Christ would allow only members to be guides at their historic sites, as is the case in their own Church. The summer I was an interpreter at the Joseph Smith Historic Site, none of the interns and fellows were members of the Community of Christ. Two identified as active LDS, one as inactive LDS, one as part of the Restoration Branches movement, and another as not part of the Latter Day Saint movement at all. This was an atypical period, as interns and fellows are mostly adherents. Most of the staff and volunteers were members. The course instructor for the summer was also a member of the Community of Christ.

Community of Christ that very few visitors, most of whom are LDS, ask about plural marriage, even as the tours pause at the cemetery and pass through homes and buildings owned by Joseph Smith, all of which have a role in the documented history of his plural marriages. This finding is based on my experience as a guide for well over a hundred tours. According to information gained from formal interviews that I conducted with six other guides, this experience is fairly typical. Together, the seven of us must have conducted hundreds of tours. The absence of questions stems from many sources, including the often subtle tension between LDS guests and their Community of Christ-employed guides, but it must also be at least partly attributable to the dominant effacement and marginalization of plural marriage in most LDS Church presentations of its history.

It is today official Community of Christ policy to no longer assert the historicity of Joseph and Emma's monogamous relationship. Although there are certainly many members of the Community of Christ who take a doctrinaire approach to the study of history, Community of Christ's current Prophet-President Stephen Veazey, the First Presidency, and others composed a document in 2008 that lists a set of "Church History Principles." In the preface, President Veazey states: "Because of my exploration of various credible works, and probing discussions with historians, some of my previously held notions have been challenged and adjusted in the face of additional knowledge. The 'apologetic' approach to church history—presenting our story in as favorable a light as possible—is not sufficient for the journey ahead." Principle 7 states in part that "historians should be free to draw their own conclusions after thorough consideration of evidence."¹³³ Even before the statement was released, however, the Church had been distancing itself from official statements that took a firm stand on the question of whether Joseph Smith Jr. practiced plural marriage.

Regardless of Community of Christ policy, polygamy-effacing features are still prevalent in the Joseph Smith Historic Site tour both narratively and materially. Information about plural marriage and plural wives is not part of the standard narrative at Community of Christ sites, including that portion of the tour concerning the cemetery. The topic is typically not mentioned unless a visitor does so first,

¹³³Stephen Veazey, "Perspectives on Church History," www.rlds.org/ourfaith/history.asp (accessed December 2011).

though as discussed above, that rarely occurs. Such effacements reinforce the idealized and sanitized LDS framings of life in Nauvoo. Community of Christ narratives, in other words, typically do not violate the LDS image of Joseph and Emma's marital exclusiveness. Mormon monogamous lives today are reinforced, though mostly unintentionally, as much by Community of Christ idealizations of the monogamous past as they are by LDS presentations. The grave memorial to Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma is a physical materialization of the confluence of historical RLDS/Community of Christ and current LDS idealizations of the monogamous past of their founder.¹³⁴ The lessons of omission learned at LDS historic sites are only reinforced by the memorial to Joseph, Emma, and Hyrum.

To give one example of the ways in which the monument actually becomes appropriated into performances related to marital monogamy, I was told by a staff member of the Joseph Smith Historic Site that LDS couples who are married in the Nauvoo Temple regularly come to the cemetery immediately after their ceremony, often still in their suits and wedding dresses, to have photographs taken and to lay bouquets on the graves. I witnessed such an event once but did not get to interview the participants. It is unclear whether this is a spontaneous practice, but it most likely is. The current LDS temple in Nauvoo was dedicated in 2002, so there is not a long tradition of temple weddings, or sealings, in the city. One interpretation of these post-sealing visits is that the participants want to pay their respects to Joseph, Emma, and Hyrum for their efforts in restoring sealing authority to the Church. Mormons believe that these sealings will allow couples to be together throughout eternity. Another interpretation, and one that may commingle with the first, is that the idealization of Joseph and Emma's romantic, companionate, and exclusive relationship in LDS narratives today has contributed to the incorporation of the monument into the celebration of new marriages, a practice which, of course, continually reimbues or inscribes the monument with meanings related to companionate marriage and places Joseph and Emma in roles as exemplars of a dedicated, monogamous couple.

Nonetheless, tensions still often exist between LDS visitors and the Community of Christ's material and oral interpretations, despite

¹³⁴By "materialization," I am not referring to a single act in which the monument or memorial was erected. Rather, I am referring to materialization in practice, which is a process that emerges in interaction with the site.

the frequent confluence of LDS and Community of Christ presentations of Nauvoo history as it relates to plural marriage. The vast majority of tour guests and visitors to the graves are LDS. The historical animosities between the two churches and their continuing and expanding differences contribute to a critical suspicion on the part of many Mormons when they visit Community of Christ sites. LDS visitors interpret what they hear, see, and feel at Community of Christ historic sites with an attentiveness to their understandings of LDS-RLDS/Community of Christ relations. In other words, LDS visitors are often slightly—on rare occasions, aggressively—guarded. They are aware that partisan interpretations could be foisted upon them in the guise of a neutral-sounding historical presentation.

As mentioned above, the 1951 granite monument placed at the gravesite of the “martyrs” prominently bore the text “erected and maintained by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.” That monument’s face is no longer visible. It is almost certain, however, that the text put LDS visitors who saw it on guard. Though I have nothing but impressionistic evidence to support the claim, it is likely that, regardless of whether LDS visitors encountered the text on an RLDS tour or by entering the memorial area without a guide, the language enhanced their critical attentiveness to RLDS messaging that might have undermined their knowledge of and feelings about the LDS versions of history in which they were invested. Regardless, they would likely not have encountered anything that contradicted their understanding of Joseph and Emma’s marriage. Even in cases in which knowledge of Joseph’s plural marriages was active in LDS visitors’ minds during their trip to RLDS properties, that knowledge often would not interfere with their appreciation of the memorial as expressing the perceived unique qualities of Joseph and Emma’s romantic and companionate relationship. It would seem natural, in other words, that Joseph and Emma would be buried side by side. That fact would not, on its own, be cause for enhanced suspicion that RLDS ideology inhered in the monogamous design of the memorial. Yet the text of the 1951 monument was a reminder of RLDS presence and control.

THE SMITH FAMILY CEMETERY TODAY

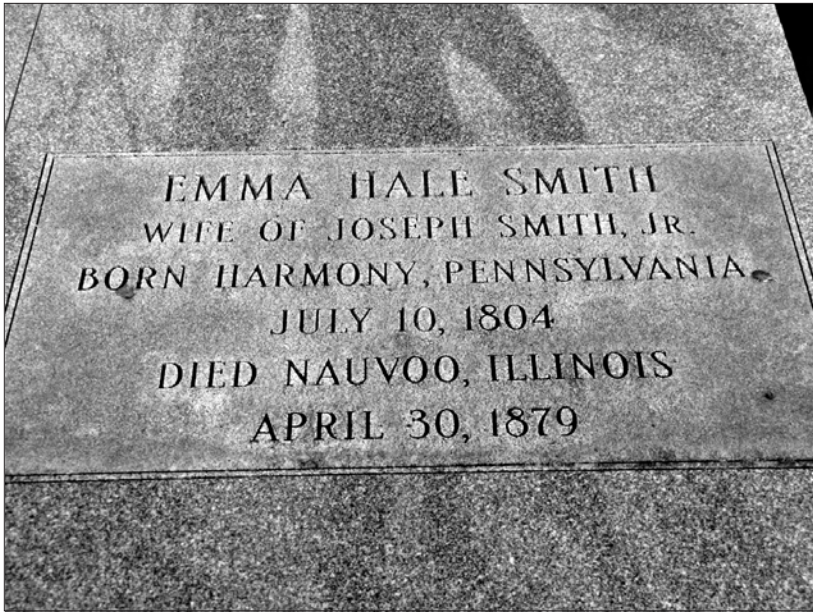
In 1991, the Joseph and Hyrum Smith Family Foundation plac-



The monument that stands today at the site of interment of Hyrum, Joseph, and Emma. It was placed in 1991 by the Joseph and Hyrum Smith Family Foundation. Photo, 2010.

ed the granite monument that stands today over Joseph, Hyrum, and Emma's remains.¹³⁵ The foundation's members come from several Latter Day Saint churches, including the LDS Church and the Community of Christ. The new monument, which sits atop its predecessor, stands several feet tall at its highest point and is similar in design, if not material, to Emma's long-lost cenotaph, though it includes memorials to three individuals rather than one. Buried beneath the new memorial is any mention of ownership by the RLDS Church. Though an interpretive sign outside the fence of the cemetery bears the Community of Christ logo, the grounds them-

¹³⁵Mackay, "A Brief History," 245. The foundation that placed the 1991 monument has since been absorbed by the Joseph Smith, Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith Family Association.



The section of the 1991 monument memorializing “Emma Hale Smith,” 2010.

selves lack any such mention. The monument is similar to its predecessor in that it is one large granite block on which each of the interred has a separate inscription directly above his or her body. Emma is now etched in stone as “Emma Hale Smith,” representing her maiden name and that of her first husband, with the addition of her role: “Wife of Joseph Smith, Jr.”

An interpretive plaque placed in 1991 beside the new monument explains:

Joseph, Emma, and Hyrum Smith

The founder of the Restoration, his wife, and his brother possessed an enduring love and devotion toward each other.

Joseph once described the bond between himself and Hyrum as love that is stronger than death. Joseph and Emma’s marriage and family life were often tested by hardships and persecutions. Joseph was an affectionate husband and Emma’s “true and living friend.” Joseph called Emma a “beloved companion” who was “firm, unwavering, unchangeable and affectionate.” Both expressed joy in the unending quality of their love.

SMITH FAMILY CEMETERY

THIS CEMETERY IS PART OF THE ORIGINAL HOMESTEAD OWNED AND OCCUPIED BY JOSEPH AND EMMA SMITH AND THEIR CHILDREN. JOSEPH'S PARENTS, JOSEPH SMITH, SR., AND LUCY MACK SMITH, ALSO LIVED HERE WITH THEM. LIKE OTHERS OF THEIR DAY, THEY SET ASIDE A PART OF THEIR PROPERTY FOR THE BURIAL OF FAMILY MEMBERS AND CLOSE FRIENDS. MEMBERS OF THE SMITH FAMILY BURIED HERE ARE:

JOSEPH SMITH, SR.	1771 - 1840
LUCY MACK SMITH (WIFE)	1775 - 1856
HYRUM SMITH	1800 - 1844
HYRUM SMITH, JR.	1834 - 1841

JOSEPH SMITH, JR.	1805 - 1844
EMMA HALE SMITH (WIFE)	1804 - 1879
FREDERICK G.W. SMITH	1836 - 1862
DON CARLOS SMITH	1840 - 1841
STILLBORN SON	1842 - 1842
EMMELINE GRISWOLD SMITH (WIFE OF JOSEPH III)	1838 - 1869
EVELYN REBECCA SMITH (DAUGHTER OF JOSEPH III AND EMMELINE)	1859 - 1859
JOSEPH ARTHUR SMITH (SON OF JOSEPH III AND EMMELINE)	1865 - 1866

SAMUEL H. SMITH	1808 - 1844
MARY BAILEY SMITH (WIFE)	1808 - 1841
LUCY B. SMITH	1841 - 1841

DON CARLOS SMITH	1816 - 1841
SOPHRONIA C. SMITH	1838 - 1843

CAROLINE GRANT SMITH (WIFE OF WILLIAM SMITH)	1814 - 1845
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OTHERS

ROBERT B. THOMPSON	1811 - 1841
LEWIS CRUM BIDAMON	1808 - 1891
WILBER W. GIFFORD	1853 - 1863
CELESTE GIFFORD	1855 - 1866
EDWIN JAMES GIFFORD	1863 - 1866
MAUDE A. GIFFORD	1871 - 1871

NOTE: EACH GENERATION IS INDENTED TO INDICATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN.

*PROBABLY BURIED HERE

A plaque in the Smith Family Cemetery listing those who are or who are likely buried on the property. After a long list of those interred at the site who are categorized as "members of the Smith family" is a shorter list of "Others." "Lewis Crum Bidamon" appears second on this shorter list. The four Giffords interred in the burying ground were children of James and Sevilla Gifford who were close to Emma. Photo, 2011.

This plaque reinforces the exclusiveness of Joseph and Emma's bonds, with no mention of her life after his death during which she crusaded against the LDS Church's practice of plural marriage. She is reclaimed as Joseph's devoted wife, a model for both LDS and Community of Christ adherents. Though Emma's marriage to Major Bidamon is mentioned on Community of Christ tours today, her ties to Lewis are severed at the cemetery. As mentioned above, the grave of Emma's second husband lies unmarked just a few feet away, and he is listed as "other" (meaning non-kin) on the informational plaque at the center of the cemetery. His role in Emma's life is nowhere to be found.

The elision of Major Bidamon's relationship with Emma unintentionally enables LDS projects that efface the timeframe in which she was staunchly anti-Brigham Young and anti-plural marriage. It allows her to be bound to periods of her life when she was married to Joseph Smith Jr., when plural marriage was practiced in secret and not reflected in Joseph and Emma's public life beyond a small circle of male associates and plural wives. In other words, when Mormon memory of Emma is isolated to her life with Joseph, it is easier to ignore her status in the RLDS Church and her opposition to the LDS hierarchy. Thus, the RLDS decision in 1928 to exhume and rememorialize Emma without using Bidamon's surname on her marker removed a stumbling block to LDS reclamations of Emma as Joseph's companion, as the "elect lady."

The dismissing of Major Bidamon in LDS narratives of Emma's life can be seen in its active form in the 2008 film *Emma Smith: My Story* in which Bidamon never appears but is presented nonetheless as a philanderer in the opening scenes—his relevance to Emma's life reduced largely to his infidelity—and is then ignored for the rest of the film. It was my experience as a guide at the Community of Christ's Joseph Smith Historic Site during the summer of 2011 that those Mormons who had any knowledge of Lewis Bidamon's existence tended to be informed about him exclusively by this movie. Though the film discusses plural marriage very briefly, the character of Emma explains that she and Joseph were reluctant to engage in it but that it was a commandment from God. It probably goes without saying that Emma almost certainly would not have engaged in this dialogue considering her consistent public denials after 1844 that Joseph ever practiced plural marriage. She seems to have maintained her denials even when speaking to family members, such as her son, Joseph

Smith III. Thus, the active memory of Bidamon as an unfaithful husband, coupled with the marginalization, though not the entire effacement, of the history of the LDS Church's claims that Joseph was married to numerous women combine to influence a disdain for Lewis while Joseph's multiple relationships, and the complications they might have caused in his marriage with Emma, are for the most part overlooked.

Since the Community of Christ's presence today is absent from the text of the monument itself, LDS visitors can identify with it more fully. Critical suspicion of the type that the text of the 1951 monument likely aroused in many LDS visitors may dwell with them in the cemetery to some extent, but it is not elicited by the monument itself nor by the surrounding signage. Thus, the monument and the environment of the burying ground are better able to reinforce LDS marginalization of Joseph's plural marriages without interference by critical attention to any RLDS/Community of Christ ideology that might be installed in the cemetery itself.

Furthermore, the extent to which the LDS have marginalized the history of Joseph's plural marriages and their Church's once strong advocacy on behalf of remembering those marriages can be observed in the absence of any mention of plural wives, even though Mormons have for more than two decades had some influence over the design of the memorial and the interpretive displays on cemetery property. The Smith family burying ground today is a site at which Community of Christ and LDS members' interpretations of their pasts *as they relate to polygamy* can coalesce more comfortably than ever, even if the nexus of idealized monogamy rests at intersections between the very different institutional histories, theological understandings, and claims to truth of the two churches. Remaining areas of contestation and disagreement are downplayed.

As Katherine Verdery explains, "A [dead] body's symbolic effectiveness does not depend on its standing for one particular thing . . . for among the most important properties of bodies . . . is their ambiguity, multivocality, or polysemy. Remains are concrete, yet protean; they do not have a single meaning but are open to many different readings."¹³⁶ The monument to the martyrs is not univocal. It is inscribed with monogamy-promoting features by way of repeated human interaction, a broader semiotic field, and a dense history of de-

¹³⁶Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, 28.

sign by which the RLDS Church's intent in the early twentieth century to deny Joseph Smith's practice of plural marriage is represented and the LDS Church's more recent marginalization of the memory of its own polygamous past is reinforced. Nonetheless, the monument is not limited to expressing its view only on the question of marriage. LDS and Community of Christ visitors today still have very different understandings of the roles and lives of the people buried there. And many of those varied understandings are allowed to flourish at the site without active contestation. Joseph can be the first prophet of the LDS Church and of the Community of Christ. Emma can be the anti-polygamy and anti-Brighamite warrior of Community of Christ tradition and the reclaimed "elect lady" of more recent LDS origin. Both versions of Joseph and Emma are entombed in Nauvoo on a gentle slope just a few feet from the Mississippi River.

WILLIAM SMITH'S PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS AND CONTESTED AUTHORITY IN THE POST-MARTYRDOM CHURCH

Christine Elyse Blythe

THE MAY 1845 *TIMES AND SEASONS* announced the ordination of William Smith as the new presiding patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. After the assassinations of his brothers, Joseph and Hyrum, in June 1844 and the stress-related death of his brother Samuel the next month, William Smith had delayed his return to Nauvoo from the eastern states where he was on a mission, fearing to become the next Smith martyr. However, assured of his probable safety, he brought his dying wife, Caroline, and their two young daughters back to Nauvoo, arriving May 4, 1845. At this point, despite strong competition from James J. Strang and other contestants, the Twelve, under the direction of Brigham Young, had won firm leadership over most of the

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Saints remaining in Nauvoo, including the temple.

William, who was also an apostle, could now officially replace his brother Hyrum in the Church hierarchy as presiding patriarch. According to the announcement, William had taken up residence on Water Street, just two blocks north of the Nauvoo Mansion which had been Joseph and Emma's residence and where the widowed Emma Smith was still raising their adopted daughter and four young sons. William added his own statement to the notice: "I am ready to receive the calls of the Saints, and bestow upon them their patriarchal blessings according to the order of the priesthood."¹

The Saints were now invited to visit him in the beautiful two-story home located across the road from Hyrum's office, where he, as the previous presiding patriarch had bestowed numerous blessings. William's new home had been occupied until very recently by "Mr. William Marks," who, when William had embarked on his mission was serving as the city's stake president. It seems fitting—foreshadowing things to come—that the residence which housed the new Church Patriarch was once the home of one of the highest authorities in Nauvoo, a man who also struggled to function in the shifting institution.

Like others who felt displaced in the wake of the Prophet's death, Marks's resistance to the rising authority of the Twelve left his office, as well as his Church membership vulnerable. After ongoing and irreconcilable disputes with Apostle Brigham Young, Marks was released as stake president.² He left the city during the winter of 1844–45, realizing that his influence in Nauvoo had come to an end.

Nauvoo, the "City Beautiful," had changed dramatically by the time William Smith had finally reached it in May of 1845. Marks was not the only Latter-day Saint who had been purged from his office nor was his the only home left unoccupied. Many Latter-day Saints ac-

¹William B. Smith, "Patriarchal," *Times and Seasons* 6 (May 15, 1845): 904–5.

²In September of 1844 the High Council of Nauvoo met and recorded that "the faith, principle, and pursuit of Elder [William] Marks was called up—when it was found that he imbibed a notion different from the apostles or council—and was voted that council (in future) do business without him at their head." On October 7, 1844, Marks was rejected as stake president and would later be replaced by John Smith, William Smith's uncle. John S. Dinger, *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011), 525–26.

cepted the leadership of Brigham Young, but other members opposed the Twelve. While some, like Marks, left Nauvoo, rejecting the changes occurring within the Church, William Smith bristled against Young's leadership but attempted to maintain his voice in the community. His was a unique position. In addition to being the Church's patriarch and an apostle, he was the only surviving brother of Joseph Jr. and heavily relied on his ties to the martyred prophet to bolster his standing.

In his brief tenure as presiding patriarch (May-October 1845), William bestowed more than three hundred patriarchal blessings on the Nauvoo Saints, facilitating an important, although rarely considered, impact on the community as a whole.³ The Smith patriarchs, beginning with Joseph Sr. in 1834, spoke in a prophetic voice, pronouncing personal scripture and thus creating revelatory documents that reflect particular moments in time. As Irene Bates explained, "Patriarchal blessings afford a valuable picture of cultural changes in the church, perhaps reflective of changes in American society in general."⁴ This article considers the historical and social element of blessings, specifically those blessings given in the summer of 1845, to narrate the life of their author, William Smith, and to further reveal the content of the debates in Nauvoo during this crucial time.

This project draws on the theoretical model of sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who first coined the terms "cultural capital" and "symbolic capital" to express the exchange of goods, both material and immaterial, in order to acquire real or symbolic wealth. Specifically "cultural capital" refers to the knowledge, skills, formal or informal training, and advantages that produce social status in a community, while "symbolic capital" represents the prestige or stature possessed by an individual that acts as an important source of power to the possessor.⁵ In other words, cultural capital equals the power that brings prestige, while symbolic capital equals the prestige that brings power. With his

³H. Michael Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2007), 231–430. Marquardt emphasizes that not all patriarchal blessings were recorded, so this sum is undoubtedly less than the total number of blessings William actually gave.

⁴Irene M. Bates, "Patriarchal Blessings and the Routinization of Charisma," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 1–29.

⁵Symbolic capital has been viewed as an outgrowth of Marxist theory regarding capital, in which Marx stated that "capital is not a simple relation,

arrival in Nauvoo and the realization of his precarious standing in the Church hierarchy, William Smith began a focused campaign to negotiate for greater stature and authority by attempting to offer knowledge, as well as position, to the Nauvoo Saints. William profited from both forms of capital through marketing (1) his prophetic abilities as patriarch, (2) his rare insight into Nauvoo's esoteric practices, a symbolic currency that informed many of the post-martyrdom conflicts in the Church, (3) his ecclesiastical titles as apostle and patriarch and the bestowal of favor, and (4) perhaps most significantly, his familial tie to the Prophet Joseph Smith—a source from which many tried to establish claims of legitimacy and authority, which William viewed as essential capital in the continuation of the Church.

The process of gaining cultural or symbolic capital is necessarily grounded in the advantage one possesses over another, meaning that capitalization occurs when the real or metaphorical goods possessed are both rare and valuable. In response to the death of Joseph Smith and with no clear successor to his figurative throne, the post-martyrdom Church fostered a climate in which this type of market could thrive.

While the story of William Smith has been considered by several scholars including D. Michael Quinn, Irene M. Bates, E. Gary Smith, H. Michael Marquardt, William Shepherd, Erin B. Jennings, and others, this paper uniquely focuses on how William's patriarchal blessings unveil the conflicts of Nauvoo, drawing on motifs and themes that the patriarch pronounced in his revelatory encounters with the Saints. My methodology was surprisingly suggested by W. W. Phelps, a prominent Mormon figure of the period, who once expressed, "The blessings of good men compose an important portion of the sacred writings, and if it were in our power to bring out the records of the patriarch . . . what a catalogue of things past, present, and to come, would they exhibit."⁶ Although scholarship cannot confirm the metaphysical or revelatory properties of these blessings as defined by Latter-day Saint believers, it can explore and illuminate the influence they may have held within the community. In particular, they can facilitate a more profound understanding of the pa-

but a process, in whose various movements is always capital." Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J. D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 119.

⁶W. W. Phelps, "Ed.," *Times and Seasons* 6 (May 15, 1845): 906.

triarchs who administered them.

H. Michael Marquardt, compiler and editor of *Early Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, has catalogued the known blessings given by the early presiding patriarchs of the Church. This compilation forms the basis of my research here and is a rich source of potential future research.⁷ This article not only focuses on a cache of documents, to which, until recently, the public had limited access but also aims to provide a new trajectory from which we can draw important information regarding the life of the controversial patriarch and apostle William Smith.

In order to understand the basis for William Smith's contested interpretation of the patriarchal office, I first examine the evolution of the office of presiding patriarch during Joseph Smith Jr.'s lifetime, and thus establish its expansion. This characteristic resulted in a major controversy developed during William Smith's stint in office. The next section chronicles the tension surrounding William's interactions in the Church, tensions that would fully erupt only after Joseph's death. Against this background, I next analyze William's patriarchal blessings as documents revealing how he developed legitimacy and favor with the Nauvoo Saints. Specifically, I compare a controversial letter he published in the *Times and Seasons* with the blessings he gave during the same month and the reaction of John Taylor, Brigham Young, and other apostles who interpreted William's action as a threat to their vision of the organization. The final section examines how power was established during the succession crisis and how William, like others of the period, exchanged knowledge of esoterica for stature in the Church. In this section, I highlight important motifs in the blessings, specifically, those regarding temple ritual and death. The evolution of these motifs provide further insight into the role William took on as a result of his own experiences.

⁷He has also compiled and edited *Later Patriarchal Blessings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2012). Although it includes twenty-three blessings by Joseph Smith Sr. and forty-two by Hyrum Smith that do not appear in the first volume, it includes no newly collected blessings from William Smith. Most of this volume is devoted to the blessings of stake patriarchs, although it also includes blessings by other Smith presiding patriarchs: (John Smith, Joseph F. Smith, and Eldred G. Smith, among others).

THE PATRIARCHS AND THEIR BLESSINGS

The office of presiding patriarch reflects the process by which Mormonism constructed legitimacy—in that Joseph Smith Jr.’s interpretations of the past provided new meaning, even new functionality, to the way that Latter-day Saints interacted with that past and therefore understood the present.⁸ During the winter of 1834, Smith ordained his father, Joseph Smith Sr., to a position whose origin dated into antiquity. Symbolically, he would become a temporary father to the believers—blessing the “orphans” of the faith—whose fathers were dead or unaffiliated with the Church.⁹ Drawing on Genesis 49, the Prophet established an ecclesiastical office, which embodied the biblical scene of Jacob (Israel) blessing his posterity. However, when ordaining his father, Joseph Jr. pointed to an even older tradition:

Three years previous to the death of Adam, he called Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, and Methuselah . . . and there bestowed upon them his last blessing. . . . And the Lord administered comfort unto Adam, and said unto him, I have set thee to be at the head: a multitude of nations shall come of thee, and thou art a prince over them forever. So shall it be with my father. He shall be called a prince over his posterity, holding the keys of the patriarchal priesthood over the kingdom of God on earth, even The Church of Latter Day Saints, and he shall sit in the general assembly of patriarchs, even in the council with the Ancient of Days when he shall sit and all the patriarchs

⁸According to Jan Shipps, “The past is a matter of fundamental importance to new religious movements. The assertions on which they rest inevitably alter the prevailing understanding of what has gone before, creating situations in which the past and future must both be made new.” Jan Shipps, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 53.

⁹The blessing of one’s own family became a common practice in the early Church; but over time, the tradition of visiting the patriarch became ingrained in LDS culture. In June 1845, John Taylor wrote to the Saints: “Every father, after he has received his patriarchal blessing, is a Patriarch to his own family; and has the right to confer patriarchal blessings upon his own family; which blessing will be just as legal as those conferred by any Patriarch of the church: in fact it is his right; and a Patriarch in blessing his children, can only bless as his mouth-piece.” John Taylor, “Patriarchal,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (June 1, 1845): 921.

with him—and shall enjoy his right and Authority under the direction of the Ancient of Days.¹⁰

Joseph Sr. was a patriarch in a long line of patriarchs—a point that set the position apart from other biblically named offices that Joseph Jr. established in the Church.

Patriarchal blessings may best be understood as serving two functions. First, they were a way of linking Latter-day Saints to the past—specifically to the biblical house of Israel. As sociologist Armand L. Mauss explained, patriarchal blessings are “the earliest and most explicit tie of LDS families to literal Israelite lineage.”¹¹ While baptism recognized an individual’s adopted or natural affiliation with the house of Israel, patriarchal blessings acted as a complementary ordinance which pronounced his or her tribal designation, thus linking the individual to a particular branch with associated blessings and responsibilities.

Second, patriarchal blessings function as personal scripture—prophetic texts in which the patriarch articulates God’s revelatory pronouncements for that individual. Such blessings could disclose a person’s life mission, metaphysical identity, talents, promised blessings of mortality and immortality, and warnings of Satanic interference in that plan. Latter-day Saints believe these documents were acquired through divine means, a characteristic that was doubtless emphasized by a literary style similar to that of the KJV Bible. In this way, Latter-day Saints were being invited into the story, becoming a part of the unveiling of modern revelation.

Joseph Sr.’s blessing book—which comprised those blessings given and recorded during his tenure as patriarch (1834–40)—reflect Mormon scriptural structure. Like other books of scripture, an inscription of spiritual authenticity preceded the text of the volume, placing this canon in sacred time and space. Oliver Cowdery, who was employed as Joseph Smith’s scribe, wrote this inscription: “Joseph Smith, Sen. was ordained a president and patriarch, under the hands

¹⁰Joseph Smith Jr., quoted in Irene M. Bates and E. Gary Smith, *Lost Legacy: The Mormon Office of Presiding Patriarch* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 85. See also LDS Doctrine and Covenants 107:53–56. This revelation was recorded in the spring of 1835, more than a year following Joseph Smith Sr.’s ordination.

¹¹Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham’s Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 22.

of his son Joseph by vision and the spirit of prophecy, on the 18th of December, 1833.”¹²

Like the ancient patriarchs, Joseph Sr.’s position was related to his ancestry. In 1839, Joseph Jr. stated: “An Evangelist is a Patriarch, even the oldest man of the blood of Joseph or of the seed of Abraham.”¹³ The Book of Mormon revealed Smith as a lineal heir to Joseph and confirmed descendant of Abraham. This “revelation” established Joseph Sr.’s legitimate occupancy of his position by descent. In 1840, on his deathbed, Joseph Sr. passed the office to his heir and eldest son, Hyrum.

By 1841 Joseph Jr. had announced an augmentation in the office that would, in time, initiate a series of subsequent changes in the presiding patriarch’s service. First, he merged the offices of assistant president—previously occupied by Oliver Cowdery—and Hyrum’s current position as patriarch. Joseph stated, “The office of Assistant President is to assist in presiding over the whole Church, and to officiate in the absence of the President, according to his rank and appointment.”¹⁴ A revelatory document recorded by Joseph Smith near the time of Hyrum’s ordination stated:

And from this time forth I appoint unto him that he may be a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my church, as well as my servant Joseph;

That he may act in concert with my servant Joseph; and he shall receive counsel from my servant Joseph, who shall show unto him the keys whereby he may ask and receive, and be crowned with the same blessings, and glory, and honor, and priesthood, and gifts of the priest-

¹²Patriarchal Blessings Book 1:8–9, LDS Church History Library; introductory comments written by Oliver Cowdery in September 1835. Michael Marquardt notes a further inscription written by Oliver Cowdery a month later on October 3, 1845, in which Cowdery—speaking of blessings given by Joseph Smith Jr.—urged readers: “Let no one doubt their correctness and truth, for they will verily be fulfilled.” Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 1. This literary style is nearly identical to that used in the Book of Mormon or, later, in the Doctrine and Covenants, published in 1833, 1835, and 1844.

¹³Joseph Fielding Smith, comp. and ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976 printing), 11; D&C 124:94–95.

¹⁴Manuscript History of the Church, Book A, 179–80, LDS Church History Library.

hood, that once were put upon him that was my servant Oliver Cowdery. (D&C 124:94–95)

In this same revelation, the patriarch was given the “keys” to seal. In accordance with blessings given by Hyrum, this revelation authorized the patriarch to impart the promise of eternal life. “These blessings I seal upon thee” or “By the authority of the priesthood I seal thee up unto eternal life” became typical rhetoric found in nearly all blessings given during Hyrum’s term beginning late in 1841.¹⁵

By 1843 Joseph had begun making statements that promoted the presiding patriarch as the “highest authority in the church.” Memorably, during a sermon given in the grove in Nauvoo, Smith announced he “would not prophesy anymore, and proposed Hyrum to hold the office of prophet to the church.” Since this announcement sounded like his own resignation as the Church’s prophet, it was disconcerting to his listeners. Two weeks later when a group of Saints expressed their discontent in the arrangement, he responded by stating that he desired to “try [their] faith,” and chastised them for “not yet understand[ing] the Melchizedek priesthood.”¹⁶ D. Michael Quinn has suggested that this final comment suggests that Smith’s intentions for restructuring the Church were real, though heavily intertwined with private practices of plural marriage and the organization of the secret Quorum of the Anointed, which would not have been understood nor recognized by the majority of Saints in the city.¹⁷ A letter written by Hyrum on June 15, 1844, in Carthage, affirms the possibility that Smith intended to go through with the reorganization. Hyrum signed the letter: “HYRUM SMITH, President of the Church.”¹⁸

Whatever expansive role Joseph may have intended for Hyrum was left unaccomplished and unexplained at their deaths. The lack of a clear successor resulted in a succession crisis. Joseph’s eldest son, Joseph III, and Hyrum’s eldest son, John, were both eleven, too young to figure strongly among those who argued for lineal succession. Wil-

¹⁵Marquardt, *The Early Patriarchal Blessings*, chap. 8.

¹⁶Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, edited by B. H. Roberts, 2d ed. rev. (6 vols., 1902–12, Vol. 7, 1932; rpt., Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1948 printing): 5:510.

¹⁷D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 214.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

William Smith, during his own period of contestation, predominantly drew upon these final ambiguities to create a foundation for his own claims to stand in the place of first one brother, then the other. While his place as an apostle and as presiding patriarch were validated within the structure that the Quorum of the Twelve dominated, he moved beyond those borders, which resulted in the Twelve challenging, refuting, and finally rejecting his claims of authority. Ultimately, in October 1845, they dropped him from the quorum and excommunicated him from the Church.

WILLIAM SMITH AS PRESIDING PATRIARCH

Six years younger than his prophet brother, William Smith was barely sixteen when Joseph received the record that would later be known as the Book of Mormon. William remembered that he “was too young to be much concerned about this matter as the others”—meaning the other members of his family, who quickly became involved in the new faith. He continued, “All were anxious that I should obey the gospel.”¹⁹ In 1834, the same year that the office of presiding patriarch was announced, Joseph Jr. blessed his entire family. William’s blessing provides fascinating insight into the character of the future patriarch. Joseph prophesied: “William is as the fierce lion which divideth not the spoil because of his much strength; and in the pride of his heart he will neglect the more weighty matters until his soul is bowed down in sorrow, and then he shall return. . . . At his rebuke in the name of the Lord, the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the dead shall be unstopped, the tongue of the dumb shall be made to speak, and the lame man shall leap as a hart, and his adversaries shall not have power to—withstand his words.”²⁰ William’s blessing portrays a complex character, probably reflecting how Joseph viewed his younger brother. He was obstinate, arrogant, and occasionally violent, yet also persuasive, passionate, and at times quite eloquent.

In 1835, despite the reluctance of the three-man committee in charge of selecting apostles for the new Quorum of the Twelve, William was ordained an apostle on February 15, 1835. Oliver Cowdery

¹⁹William Smith, “The Old Soldier’s Testimony,” *Saints’ Herald* 31 (October 4, 1884): 643–44.

²⁰Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 6.

and David Whitmer, two members of the committee, later recalled that the decision was “contrary to our feelings and judgment, and to our deep mortification ever since.”²¹ In fact, only four years after his ordination, William was suspended from the quorum as a critique of his behavior during the Mormon exodus from Missouri to Illinois. Nevertheless, the apostle’s relation to the Prophet proved advantageous in the face of conflict with other members of the hierarchy, and he was soon reinstated.

The next several years were a period of change in William’s involvement with the Church. In the spring of 1843, William was called east on a mission, first serving as a missionary and, by 1845, presiding over the Church in the eastern states generally. In May of 1844 he returned to Nauvoo for a few weeks. Unbeknownst to all of the family, William was visiting his brothers for the last time. Although the visit lasted only a few weeks, the apostle quickly found himself immersed in the esoteric practices of Nauvoo’s hierarchy. During this time, he was initiated into the Council of Fifty, the new political arm of the faith, exposed to the new practice of plural marriage, and received the ritual endowment.²² At the end of this visit, William was assigned to campaign in behalf of his brother, Joseph, who had launched a

²¹Oliver Cowdery, Letter to Brigham Young, February 27, 1848, LDS Church History Library.

²²William was admitted into the “Anointed Quorum” on May 12, 1844. However, he was never given his second anointing as administered to Brigham Young. On October 29, 1845, the *Warsaw Signal* published a letter by William Smith in which he described his initiation into the “Anointed Quorum”: “I was present with Joseph at the last council that was held previous to the Twelve and others going on their electionering campaign to the east and various parts of the United States; it was at this time that I received my initiation into the highest priesthood lodge [The Anointed Quorum], was washed and anointed, and clad with the sacerdotal robe of pure white, and ordained to be priest and king, and invested with all the power that any man on earth ever did possess; power entitling me to preach the gospel, to bind up the kingdom of God on earth, among all nations, and all people of every tongue. In consequence of these endowments and ordination received from under the hands of Joseph, I hold as much power and as many keys to seal and bind on earth, as can possibly belong to Brigham Young; this power was conferred equally on all the Twelve, and not therefor bestowed on one.” William Smith, “A Proclamation,” *Warsaw Signal* 2 (Octo-

campaign as candidate for U.S. president in January. As William returned to the East, the rest of the apostles likewise were sent out to campaign.

The scattered apostles learned of the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum in a variety of places; but by early August, most had returned to Nauvoo. In contrast, however, the Twelve urged William to stay away, fearing that William's life was "threatened, with all the Smiths."²³ Although the hierarchy's concern may have been sincere, the warning ensured that William was absent during the most important period of restructuring in the Church and the Twelve's successful rebuff of the immediate challenge posed by Sidney Rigdon. These developments only fueled William's anger when he returned to Nauvoo in May 1845.

On the surface, the events taking place in his absence seemed to add stature to William's position in the eyes of the Saints. On August 8, 1844, a heated debate between Sidney Rigdon and Brigham Young commenced in Nauvoo. Rigdon, the senior member of the first presidency, decried the idea of appointing a successor and argued that he should be made a "protector" to the Church. However, Young, the senior apostle, contended that the keys of administration remained with the Twelve. The congregation voted overwhelmingly to accept the Twelve's leadership and to "sustain the twelve as such in their calling as next in presidency & to sustain Elder Rigdon and A[masa] Lyman as counselors to the twelve as they had been to the first presidency."²⁴ This decision meant that William, as one of the twelve apostles, shared in that authority.

On August 24, 1844, William wrote to Brigham Young: "Will the brethren remember me & my claims in the Smith family. I do not mean succession as a prophet in Joseph's place for no man on Earth can fill his place he is our prophet, seer, revelator, priest and king in time & eternity & hence the 12 come next to him on Earth as presiding officers and govern the Church in all things temporal & spiritu-

ber 29, 1845). For more information on William Smith and his experience in the Church, see Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, 595–97.

²³Willard Richards, Letter to Brigham Young, June 30, 1844, LDS Church History Library.

²⁴Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898*, typescript, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983–85), 2:440.

ally receiving revelation from Joseph as the ancient apostles did from Christ.”²⁵ The letter specifies William’s support of the Twelve as “presiding officers” in governing the Church—and hence of Brigham Young’s position as senior apostle. However, according to D. Michael Quinn, William had already claimed the office of presiding patriarch as early as July of 1844,²⁶ suggesting that his primary intent in writing to Brigham Young was to secure his own position as presiding patriarch and only coincidentally to affirm support for the Church’s new administration. William continued his letter to Young with that claim that the presiding patriarch not only stood as a “father to the whole church” but also as a revelator and a prophet. While Latter-day Saints viewed prototypical patriarchs such as Adam, Abraham, or Jacob as prophets and patriarchs, such perspectives had been uncommon regarding the modern patriarchs. William felt that Joseph’s later and controversial perspectives of the patriarch vindicated his position, nor did Young challenge William’s final claim, “The privilege [of presiding patriarch] must continue in the Smith family while they live and are in the faith.”²⁷

Nearly a month passed before Young’s response made its way east. While the letter clearly extended the position of presiding patriarch to the enthused apostle, it also offered William the choice of deferring his position to Joseph Sr.’s brothers, John or Asael. Still, Young closed the letter, “We wish you to come to Nauvoo as soon as possible to receive your ordination of Patriarch by the proper authorities, so that you may officiate in giving the saints their patriarchal blessings.”²⁸

Young’s reluctance to ordain William was only heightened when letters from Wilford Woodruff and Parley P. Pratt, then working among members in the East, accused William of teaching and practicing “spiritual wifery,” meaning his understanding of polygamy.²⁹ William had already performed two polygamous sealing ceremonies for local Church officers Samuel Brannon and George J. Adams. In his

²⁵William Smith, Letter to Brigham Young, August 24, 1844, Brigham Young Collection, LDS Church History Library.

²⁶Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, 214.

²⁷Smith, Letter to Young, August 24, 1844.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Wilford Woodruff, Letter to Brigham Young, Boston, October 9,

much later biography, Pratt recalled that these men stood side by side, teaching “all manner of false doctrine and immoral practices, by which many of them [the members] had stumbled and been seduced from virtue and truth. While many others, seeing their iniquity had turned away from the Church and joined various dissenting parties.”³⁰ Brigham Young was perpetuating the practice of plural marriage among the faithful as one of the works of Joseph, but polygamy had not yet been publicly introduced, and William’s engagement in the unauthorized practice dismayed and angered the Nauvoo apostles.³¹ Later, in an article addressed to the Nauvoo Saints, the patriarch countered the rebuke of others in the Twelve by assuring the Saints that he had rightfully taught “principles of virtue and morality” demanding that “no individual, whether he be a prophet, priest, or Pharisee, can in truth say ought to the contrary.”³² William did not refute—perhaps deliberately—the claims that he had taught polygamy in the East.³³

On May 4, 1845, after his extended absence, William returned to Nauvoo for ordination and prepared to settle into his new position among the Saints. On May 24 his ailing wife, Caroline, passed away. The afternoon following her funeral, the Twelve met privately to ordain William “Patriarch to the whole Church.” Willard Richards re-

1844, LDS Church History Library. For Pratt’s communications with Young, see Terry L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 234–35. Pratt’s letter would have come later, during his own visit to the eastern states in January 1845.

³⁰Parley P. Pratt [Jr.], ed., *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Embracing His Life, Ministry and Travels, with Extracts in Prose and Verse, from His Miscellaneous Writings* (New York: Russell Brothers, 1874), 374–75.

³¹More damning, however, may have been lingering accusations from 1842 when William was criticized for his affiliation with Nauvoo’s mayor John C. Bennett and his adulterous practices. Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, 220.

³²Smith, “Patriarchal,” 904.

³³According to Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*, 212–26, “Brigham Young alternated between conciliation and confrontation in 1845 as William Smith’s sexual interests got mixed up with his efforts to maintain the status of Hyrum Smith’s patriarchal office.”

counted: “There was a warm interchange of good feelings between Wm Smith and the Quorum.”³⁴ However, it was only a matter of days before the pleasant moment dissipated and William’s determination to voice his claims of authority became clear. While William rarely shied away from publicly stating his opinion, his patriarchal blessings circumspectly became a vehicle for *privately* protesting changes in the Church and expressing the fears he faced on the home front.

PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS AND CONTESTED AUTHORITY

William’s relationship with the remaining Twelve became increasingly strained when the May 15 issue *Times and Seasons* was published (late in June) and distributed throughout the city.³⁵ It contained an article, “Patriarchal,” by William Smith that stated: “All but one have sealed their testimony with their blood, their work remains as a monument of their indomitable perseverance, their faith, their wisdom and their greatness.”³⁶ As the only remaining male descendant of the first Mormon family, William believed that his bloodline entitled him to seniority in the church. He continued:

After having been beaten, driven, and persecuted for a long series of years; after having been compelled, so many times, by mobs, to sacrifice this world’s goods—though fifteen years of my life have been spent in the service of my fellow-men, and in the building up of the kingdom of God; though reduced to poverty and distress; and though I have suffered the loss of all I hold dear, yet, I do not complain, my trust is in the God of Israel, who make[s] all things work together for the good of his Saints. Brethren, I have now settled among you—the last of my family. Shall I be sustained by this community?³⁷

William began to define himself in light of the murders and misfortunes of the Smith men, a living martyr, to carry the name of his deceased yet venerated predecessors. As a result of Hyrum and Joseph’s deaths, ambiguity obscured the proper role of the patriarch. As evidenced in his patriarchal blessings, William saw himself as

³⁴Willard Richard, Diary, May 24, 1845, LDS Church History Library.

³⁵“Delayed,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (May 15, 1845): 904, explains that the paper had been delayed because the Doctrine and Covenants was competing for press time.

³⁶Smith, “Patriarchal,” 904.

³⁷*Ibid.*

Hyrum's successor in the fullest sense possible—including, apparently, Hyrum's position in the First Presidency and perhaps even Joseph's odd relinquishment of the position of prophet. On June 21, 1845, in a blessing given to William A. Beebe, the patriarch concluded: "by the highest authority in the church of God I seal thee up to eternal life . . ." ³⁸ This phrase, "highest authority in the church" appeared six times in William's patriarchal blessings in just over one month. In fact, more than one-third of William's blessings during this period contain statements competing for authority in the Church hierarchy—particularly against his associates, the Quorum of the Twelve.

W. W. Phelps, who at the time served as assistant editor for the *Times and Seasons*, wrote in support of William's interpretation of the office of presiding patriarch, attaching his own testimonial to William's position. This section of the article, in particular, exacerbated the tensions building around the patriarch's ordination. Phelps wrote, "William is the last of the family, and truly inherits the blood and spirit of his father's house, as well as the priesthood and patriarchal office from his father and brother, legally and by hereditary descent." Furthermore, William, if worthy, will "be governed by the spirit of the living God and possesses the power to bless his own offspring," ³⁹ as did Adam, Abraham, and Jacob. To be "governed by the spirit of the living God" suggested that William may have envisioned a degree of autonomy as presiding patriarch to the Church. ⁴⁰

Apostle John Taylor, infuriated by the claims of the newly ordained patriarch, published a prompt and impassioned response in the next installment of the *Times and Seasons*, which was also printed late, likely in the latter part of June. Taylor wrote, "Since the publication of the last Times and Seasons, we have frequently been interrogated about the meaning of some remarks made by Eld. Wm. Smith in an article headed patriarchal, and also concerning some expressions in the editorial connected therewith." He continued, "As the na-

³⁸Marquardt, *The Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 240.

³⁹W. W. Phelps, "Ed.," 905–6.

⁴⁰As Irene Bates noted, the editorial was signed "[Ed.]" indicating that the "readership [may have] thought the articles reflected the position of the influential apostle" John Taylor who, at the time, was serving as the editor of the *Times and Seasons*. Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 83.

ture of the office of Patriarch, does not seem to fully be understood, we thought a little explanation on this point may not be a miss”—satire aimed to undermine Phelps’s previous remark that, “It may not be *amiss* to give the readers of the Times and Seasons, a few ideas relative to the office of patriarch.”⁴¹

The crux of the debate centered on whether William was the “patriarch *over* the Church” or “patriarch *to* the Church.” However, Taylor wanted no confusion that the full implications of being a patriarch did not mean administrative leadership over other positions beyond that of the patriarchs. In a blessing given to Mary Pitchforth in June, William asserted: “No blessing can be greater conferred by a mortal man on earth,” or, in other words, William saw his authority as superior to that of other ecclesiastical leaders within the Church. However, Taylor rejected this claim: “We have been asked, ‘Does not patriarch *over* the *whole* church’ place Brother William Smith at the head of the whole church as president? Ans. No. Brother William is not patriarch *over* the *whole* church; but patriarch *TO* the church, and as such he was ordained. The expression ‘*over* the *whole* church,’ is a mistake made by W. W. Phelps.”⁴²

Still, the expression “*over*” the Church appears five times in the blessings William gave in June, and the phrase “prophet and patriarch” appears six times, showing that William took seriously the claim that the offices of prophet and patriarch were connected—even one and the same. Although Taylor was likely unaware of the controversial statements William used to defend his position in individual patriarchal blessings (it is not clear whether they were given in group or individual settings), the *Times and Seasons* clearly reflected that assertion, as did questions from concerned Saints who were unsettled about William’s claims.

The overt contest between William Smith and John Taylor, as played out in the newspaper, was about an accrual of ecclesiastical position, but material concerns were also involved. For the patriarch to enhance his self-image would make receiving a patriarchal blessing more desirable and, hence, enhance his monetary gain. In 1840, the going rate for a patriarchal blessing was one dollar. If this payment remained the same, according to those blessings documented from

⁴¹Taylor, “Patriarchal,” 920; W. W. Phelps, “Ed.,” 905; emphasis mine.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 921; emphasis Taylor’s.

June 1845 to October 1845 in Marquardt's compilation, William would have made around three hundred dollars in a six-month period. For comparison purposes, in 1840 a laborer received \$12 a week in Illinois, but this wage included room and board and much more strenuous labor—especially when considering William would have given most blessings either in his own home or that of the recipient, meaning his overhead or travel expenses were virtually nonexistent.

William had found a way to commodify his authority in exchange for economic wealth. In a blessing given to Esther Russell, William described his blessing as “purely patriarchal the author[i]ty of which has been handed down by a legal descent from holy patriarchs and prophets in the church of God.”⁴³ Throughout June William repeatedly makes a distinct, though subtle, distinction in respect to his patriarchal authority, stating it to be “purely” or “truly patriarchal.”⁴⁴ While the office of presiding patriarch did indicate leadership over other patriarchs, it did not specify a particular potency that made the presiding patriarch's blessings superior to others. Phelps, who initially interjected that William had been called to “carry out the pattern of scripture” as a “chosen seed” to bless all who did not have a “father living to do it,” was discredited by Taylor, who insisted that the Saints could choose who would administer their blessings, despite his “priority and presidency.” Blessings given in July or later do not include the phrases “truly” and “purely patriarchal.”

William Smith's efforts had a greater impact than scholars have previously recognized. In the weeks following the distribution of the May issue of the *Times and Seasons*,⁴⁵ nine Latter-day Saints, who had previously received a patriarchal blessing under William's forerunners, turned to the newly ordained patriarch for a second blessing, constituting 15 percent of the total blessings bestowed in June. Although receiving a second patriarchal blessing was not completely uncommon in the period, those accounted for previous to William's term were largely given in connection with priesthood ordinations.⁴⁶ Hyrum Smith gave five second blessings over a four-year period, in

⁴³Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 275.

⁴⁴For examples, see *Ibid.*, 254, 261, 264, 265, 273, 275, 276, 277.

⁴⁵The paper was printed late, so it would have been distributed in Nauvoo probably in June.

⁴⁶One blessing that William rebestowed may be credited to the lack of

comparison to the nine performed by William Smith in a period of one month. This pattern seems to suggest that some subscribed to his claims of patriarchal supremacy. For this reason, we should consider the possibility that at least some also subscribed to William's claim to the position of prophet, which was certainly what the apostles feared.

Publicly William continued to oscillate between support and insurrection. While public displays of hostility were frequent, his use of patriarchal blessings represented a largely private venture by which he garnered support from those who possessed less capital. In other words, the Saints gained metaphysical authority, blessings, comfort, and a direct line to the divine, while William gained status and power. Furthermore, patriarchal blessings served as a means of expression for the patriarch, in which William was able to voice his anxieties—particularly those regarding what he believed to be his inherited authority. This, he did without the fear of the Twelve's reprisal. Moreover, he promoted his own position in a setting where his audience was most open to suggestion. If it were not for Taylor's public rebuttal, it seems likely that these private expressions of power would have continued more substantially into July and throughout the remainder of William's term.

Naturally where William found the most support was within the Smith family. However, such support only exacerbated the ten-

lineage noted in the original blessing, which he conferred on Jane F. Pea, the first on August 6, 1845, and the second on August 22. Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 389, 390. Marquardt also suggests that some blessings included in Joseph Smith Sr.'s blessing book may have been given to those journeying to Missouri in 1834. *Ibid.*, 68 note 2. An example spelling out background of a mission to redeem Zion is in the blessing of Charles Coulson Rich, pronounced in 1836. They may not have been viewed as patriarchal blessings by those who received them, validating the need for a second or original blessing from Hyrum Smith. Because we are aware that Hyrum's patriarchal blessing book contains only a limited number of his blessings, further research will either confirm or contradict this hypothesis. However, as an increase of secondary blessings was requested during the month of June, correlating with William's article in the *Times and Seasons*, it seems likely that these repeat blessings were based on the Saints' increased respect for the new Presiding Patriarch and his authority. For more information on Zion's blessings, see Benjamin E. Park, "Thou Was Willing to Lay Down Thy Life for Thy Brethren': Zion's Blessings in the Early Church," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 29 (2008): 27.

sions. On June 27, 1845, the first anniversary of Joseph and Hyrum's deaths, Lucy Mack Smith, their widowed mother, claimed a vision lionizing William as presiding patriarch *and* as Church president. According to John Taylor's report of her vision, she heard a voice saying:

Thy son William he shall have power over the Churches. He is father in Israel over the patriarchs and the whole of the Church, he is the last of the lineage that is raised up in these last days. He is patriarch to regulate the affairs of the Church. He is President over all the Church, they cannot take his apostleship away from him. The presidency of the Church belongs to him. The presidency of the Church belongs to William, he being the last of the heads of the Church, according to the lineage, he having inherited it from the family from before the foundation of the earth. . . . [Lucy then commented:] Brother and children, I want you to take notice that the burden of the Church rests [on William].⁴⁷

Although Mother Smith quickly retracted her statement—explaining she did not claim to be a revelator except to her own family—her concern for preserving a place for the Smiths in the hierarchy was not unusual, considering the influence they had previously held in the Church.⁴⁸ In fact, in a council held on June 25, 1845, two days before Lucy's vision, William made his expectations as a Smith clear to the Quorum of the Twelve when he threatened to leave the Church, taking “his sisters, his mother, and the last remains of the family and that where he and they went there the priesthood, authority, and the church would be.”⁴⁹ His experiment to see how much power he had accrued failed, however, when Young rejoined sharply that “he did not receive his priesthood from William but from his brother” and neither was “this Church indebted to William for the priest-

⁴⁷Dean C. Jessee, “The John Taylor Nauvoo Journal: January 1845–September 1845,” *BYU Studies* 23, no. 3 (1983): 55. See also Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 100 note 77.

⁴⁸According to a letter from William to Emma Smith, October 21, 1844, LDS Church History Library, he received Church support briefly due to his office as patriarch.

⁴⁹John Taylor, Journal, June 25, 1845, LDS Church History Library.

hood.”⁵⁰ Although reconciliation was made, William hardly scaled back his claims. Later, he asserted, “There seems to be a severe influence working against me and the Smith family in this place.”⁵¹ Over the next several weeks, he exchanged heated correspondence with Brigham Young and the Twelve; and by fall, hopes of resolution had become fairly dim.⁵²

THE NAUVOO TEMPLE AND PATRIARCHAL BLESSINGS: DEATH, RITUAL, AND POWER

The construction of the Nauvoo Temple had began barely over a year from the time the Saints first trudged into the marshes of Illinois. It was on April 6, 1841, the eleventh anniversary of the founding of the Church that the cornerstone was laid and construction commenced. Joseph Smith Jr. envisioned a structure towering nearly sixty-five feet high, in which would be revealed those “things which have been hid from before the foundations of the world” (D&C 124:38).

The rituals that would be performed, such as baptisms for the dead, sacerdotal washings and anointings, the ceremonial endowment, and marital sealing rites referred to as “celestial marriage” were initially introduced in other locations designated throughout Nauvoo. However, with the exception of baptisms for the dead, most practices were restricted to Nauvoo’s elite, pending the temple’s completion. At the Prophet’s death in 1844, the temple was only half-completed, but the Saints continued to vigorously labor, undeterred by threats of expulsion.

Historian Lawrence Foster identified that the most significant function of temple building was “the sense of awe, mystery, and expectation with which the Saints awaited the secret ceremonies of

⁵⁰Brigham Young, recorded by John Taylor and quoted in Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 88.

⁵¹William Smith, Letter to Brother Little, August 20, 1845, *Journal History*.

⁵²Within a few months (June-August), William had taken at least four additional wives, three of whom were sealed to him in August. George D. Smith, *Nauvoo Polygamy: “. . . but we called it celestial marriage”* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2008), 623.

power.”⁵³ While lay members of the Church toiled in anticipation, the hierarchy—those who had already received the ordinances—interpreted the incomplete and therefore inaccessible structure as a symbol of legitimacy. While the temple ultimately offered Mormons a sacred authority founded in Smith’s teachings of the afterlife, it also sacralized a physical social hierarchy. Although William enjoyed the benefits that accompanied his respective offices, the patriarch desired to further infiltrate that social order veiled within the temple. However, it was the doctrine taught and the symbol of the temple itself that ultimately provided William with a way to negotiate his own authority by attending to the needs of the people and, subsequently, his own anxieties.

As William possessed an extremely coveted understanding of esoteric Nauvoo, the temple provided him with a way to escort the Saints through his own interpretation of occurrences and developing innovations within the Church. The medium of patriarchal blessings allowed him a forum in which to instruct the Saints on a subject that was otherwise restricted. In this way, William established intellectual commerce, trading knowledge for stature. It was a continuation of William’s strategy in the East where he had taught polygamy despite the hierarchy’s counsel to restrict the matter to Nauvoo’s inner circle.

The blessings that William gave in July 1845 progressively included more information about the temple. After John Taylor’s public rebuff of William’s claim to being the “highest authority in the church,” including past “prophets and patriarchs,” William discarded those references. While they certainly reflect the culture of the post-martyrdom period (in attempting to make sense of the events surrounding transitions), power and death as understood through temple ritual became the very heart of William’s instructions to the Saints. First, he addressed the temple’s potential to mobilize followers toward divine power; and second, the temple rites could bridge the gap between life and death. William used these two valuable aspects to market his own position as presiding patriarch.

LDS temple ceremonies stem from a basic principle of “death conquest”—a term coined by Douglas Davies and later employed by Samuel Morris Brown in describing Mormonism’s soteriological teachings—which subverts fear of death and consoles the grief of the

⁵³Lawrence Foster, *Religion and Sexuality: The Shakers, the Mormons, and the Oneida Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 186.

bereaved.⁵⁴ Assisting in that subversion were Joseph Smith's teachings regarding vicarious or proxy rituals for the deceased, introduced in 1840. Believing that baptism was a prerequisite of salvation, Smith drew on Corinthians 15:29: "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?" Theologically, he established a process of salvation focused on the temple that quickly became one of the greatest collaborative efforts of the Latter-day Saints.

Davies commented: "The culture of salvation not only made the conquest of death available for the individual but also reinforced an individual responsibility" and, I would infer, authority, "to foster the salvation of others, dead or alive."⁵⁵ This theme serves as the backbone to several of William Smith's blessings. For example, in a blessing pronounced for James M. Wait on June 28, 1845, William stated: "And when thou art made more perfect thou shalt realize the glory and power of all of the ordinances pertaining to the house of God, for as a Savior thou wilt be called to stand and defend the rights of thy bretheren [sic] and to snatch their Spirits in the Spiritual world as brands from the burning, in the baptismal font thou shall declare it, they shall hail thee—who are thus redeemed as their king—and as their Savior."⁵⁶

On April 15, 1842, Joseph Smith published a revelation in the *Times and Seasons*. Quoting a passage from Obadiah he wrote, "And Saviors shall come upon Mount Zion" referring to the Saints who would soon participate in proxy work for the deceased.⁵⁷ In a blessing given on July 14, 1845, to Thomas Green, William stated, "The names of thy fathers shall be known to thee, up to the time their priesthood was lost and unto them though shalt prove a Saivior [Savior] on Mount Zion, it is appointed unto thee dear Brother to do a work in the Baptismal font."⁵⁸ This phrase, "Savior on Mount Zion," appears regularly in William's blessings. However, the temple ceremony was an

⁵⁴Douglas J. Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2000), 5. See also Samuel Morris Brown, *In Heaven as It Is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁵⁵Davies, *The Mormon Culture of Salvation*, 103.

⁵⁶Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 256.

⁵⁷Editorial, *Times and Seasons*, April 25, 1842.

⁵⁸Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 316.

chored in much more grandiose expressions of authority, and William commonly referred to the symbolic crowning of kings and queens, priest and priestesses, the building of kingdoms, and the exaltation of human beings. It was not solely the accumulation of deceased subjects but the knowledge of human's potential by which William empowered the Saints—and by which he himself found empowerment.

In a blessing given on August 11, 1845, to Thore Thoresten, William spoke of Thoresten's forefathers in ancient times who had received their temple endowments: "They understood the mysteries of the priesthood, the power of priesthood authority, held the oracles and wore the sacred robe, to them it was given to understand the principles and powers by which kingdoms and empires were built up, kings and thrones were glorified."⁵⁹ As he envisioned these ancient figures, William apparently perceived himself as one who "understood the mysteries of the priesthood" and to whom "it was given to understand the principles of power." This may have also been in reference to the blessing Joseph Sr. extended to William in 1834 in which he promised his son: "Thou shalt be filled with the treasures of wisdom, understand the hidden things of the kingdom of thy God."⁶⁰

William later published this blessing in 1850 in the *Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, a paper published briefly by the short-lived church William founded in Covington, Kentucky, with Isaac Sheen.⁶¹ In this publication, William numbered segments of the blessing likely to emphasize his personal prestige and as an attempt to canonize his blessing by adding verse numbers. "Hidden things of the kingdom" was number five.

In July of 1845, the *Times and Seasons* printed a portion of William Smith's patriarchal blessing given by his brother Joseph Smith Jr. (1833), which presents a less flattering portrayal of the patriarch:

Brother William is as the fierce lion, who divideth not the spoil because of his strength, and in the pride of his heart he will neglect the more weighty matters until his soul is bowed down in sorrow, and then he shall return and call on the name of his God and shall find forgive-

⁵⁹Ibid., 398.

⁶⁰Ibid., 17.

⁶¹Isaac Sheen, "B. Young's Lineage," *The Melchisedek and Aaronic Herald of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* 1 (February 1850): 4.

ness, and shall wax valiant, therefore, he shall be saved unto the uttermost; and as the roaring lion of the forest in the midst of his prey, so shall the hand of his generation be lifted up against those who are set on high, that fight against the God of Israel; fearless and undaunted shall they be in battle, in avenging the wrongs of the innocent, and relieving the oppressed; therefore, the blessings of the God of Jacob shall be in the midst of his house notwithstanding his rebellious heart. And now, O God, let the residue of my father's house, ever come up in remembrance before thee, that thou mayest save them from the hand of the oppressor, and establish their feet upon the rock of ages, that they may have place in thy house; and be saved in thy kingdom, and let all things be even as I have said, for Christ's sake: Amen.⁶²

This blessing enraged William Smith who confronted the Twelve and demanded that a fuller version be published. The following month the apostles responded affirmatively to his request:

Brother William is as the fierce lion which divideth not the spoil because of his much strength, and in the pride of his heart he will neglect the more weighty matters, until his soul is bowed down in sorrow; and then he shall return and call on the name of his God, and shall find forgiveness and shall wax valiant in the cause of truth: therefore he shall be saved unto the uttermost, and shall be endowed with power from on high. At his rebuke, in the name of the Lord, the eyes of the blind shall be opened; the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped; the tongue of the dumb shall be made to speak, and the lame man shall leap as a hart: and his adversaries shall not have power to withstand his words. Hell shall tremble because of him, and Satan shall flee from before his face and he shall be as a roaring lion of the forest in the midst of his prey:—so shall his hand be in the midst of his enemies among those who know the Lord, but seek the injury of the righteous. And the hand of his generation shall be lifted up also against those who are set on high, that fight the God of Israel: fearless and undaunted shall they be in battle, in avenging the wrongs of the innocent and relieving the oppressed;—Therefore the blessings of the God of Jacob shall be on him to the uttermost, and in the midst of his house from generation to generation forever. And he shall be lifted up at the last day, and shall come up before the Lord like as a full shock of corn, laden with his tens of thousands as a reward of his labors, with songs of everlasting joy, with

⁶²“Revelation, given December 16, 1833,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (July 1, 1845): 947–48.

hosannas upon his lips, to God the Lamb, to go no more out. Amen.⁶³

It is clear that William identified with the more flattering expressions in his blessings and used them to legitimize and promote his position. Like others, his personal patriarchal blessing played a role in the way he came to understand his own identity. Like other elite members of the Church, his experiences with the rites of the temple bestowed a certain amount of legitimacy on his authority in that they connected his worldview with that of Joseph's. Without a clear successor appointed to the Church, William was very literally involved in an effort to seize empire.

By 1845 neighboring hostilities had risen to an ultimate high; and as a result, anti-American sentiment likewise had risen in Nauvoo. While Smith had made multiple nonviolent attempts to obtain redress for the Saints, specifically for their forcible expulsion from Missouri, Smith's assassination drove forward a hope in God's punitive and unbridled vengeance. The notion that God would fight their battles and take vengeance on their (therefore also God's) enemies is a repeated theme in both the Old and New Testaments. A notable passage is Revelation 6:9–11:

And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

This theme also appears in the Book of Mormon, for example: "For behold, they murdered all the prophets of the Lord who came among them to declare unto them concerning their iniquities; and the blood of those whom they murdered did cry unto the Lord their God for vengeance upon those who were their murderers; and thus the judgments of God did come upon these workers of darkness and secret combinations" (Alma 37:37).

William drew on these ideas to empower Latter-day Saints to

⁶³"A Blessing," *Times and Seasons* 6 (July 15, 1845): 968.

view themselves and their ancestors as active participants in claiming justice. In a blessing given to James Rigby on July 21, 1845, William promised: "And as an avenger of the blood of the Prophets & Patriarchs thou shalt stand a mighty Warrior and contend with great strength for the cause of Zion—then be comforted dear Brother for thou hast much to do. Gird up thy loins and be true and faithful. And when the temple is finished and the endument [endowment] of the Saints is accomplished thy duty shall be more fully made known, for there remaineth a greater blessing for thee, which cannot be told at this time."⁶⁴

In a blessing given to Abigail Abott on June 23, 1845, William returned to this theme:

One of thy posterity named after the name of his father . . . shall be a mighty warrior, and be led to avenge the blood of prophets and patriarchs, he shall lead a mighty people from the wilderness and one mighty among them who shall be also a mighty warrior by the name of Nishcosh. He shall be a descendant of one of the name of Nimrod, who was also a descendant of that Nimrod, who was a mighty hunter in days of old, by way of Jaredites upon this continent, who founded a city and called it Gnoalum [sic],⁶⁵ this city now lying in ruins the wreck of which only appears as the last descriptive monument of a people that has fallen and the remnants of whom have become barbarous wild, and uncultivated.⁶⁶

This example is particularly compelling as it captures William in the process of scriptural creation, like Joseph, who used the Bible as a foundation for creating and recreating scriptural narrative which bridged the gap between the past and present. In this case, William was drawing from the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham as a means of placing Abott's descendants in the scriptural narrative. He

⁶⁴Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 338.

⁶⁵"Nimrod" appears as both a place-name and a personal name in Ether 2:4, 7:22. Joseph Smith acquired Egyptian papyrus and mummies in Kirtland in 1835; his translation was published serially in the *Times and Seasons* beginning March 1, 1842, at Nauvoo. "Gnolaum" appears in Abraham 3:18: "These two spirits, notwithstanding one is more intelligent than the other, have no beginning; they existed before, they shall have no end, they shall exist after, for they are gnolaum, or eternal."

⁶⁶Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 244.

thus added to the sacred narrative of the faith through his blessings.

Possessing an inaccessible knowledge that was held sacred by his community, was ultimately to possess power; and William's identity as a patriarch and an endowed member of the Church formed around such an advantage. W. W. Phelps, in his ill-received endorsement of William Smith's "Patriarchal" article, stated: "No Latter-day Saint, having the spirit of God, will go to the world of spirits, before he receives his patriarchal blessing."⁶⁷ Whether this statement was injunction, promise, or both is difficult to tell. William certainly viewed his blessings as superior to those of other patriarchs in light of his lineal position. However, William may have also developed the idea that a patriarchal blessing was essential—even an ordinance of similar magnitude to those performed in the temple, although his fellow apostles would certainly not have subscribed to this position.

Whether patriarchal blessings were seen as a necessary or merely beneficial ritual, life and death were conceptually bridged through ritual temple performances, particularly, though not exclusively, in the rituals performed for the dead. This aspect of the temple provided William with a means to not only accrue power but also to confront fears and anxiety in his own life. As the only remaining male of the Joseph Smith Sr. family and as a recent widower, it is not hard to imagine that William felt all too familiar with the hardships of death. By May 1845, William Smith had sustained the deaths of six family members—his wife, father, and four brothers. Evidently feeling at odds with the Church, William's anxieties reached an all-time high—not only fearing the loss of position but also the possibility that he, too, would be assassinated—and by fellow Mormons. On June 25, he pled with Brigham Young in a letter: "News has come to me that certain men are forming a conspiracy to put me out of the way in this city."⁶⁸ Young assured the patriarch that his life was in no danger.⁶⁹ However, William's anxiety had been provoked by the arrest of Wil-

⁶⁷Phelps, "Ed.," 905–6.

⁶⁸Jessee, "The John Taylor Nauvoo Journal," 52–56.

⁶⁹Following his excommunication, William's "Proclamation," *Warsaw Signal*, October 29, 1845, recounted that his pleas for protection had been met with extreme hostility. Young and the Twelve had invited the patriarch to the Masonic Hall: "What was my surprize to find some fifty or sixty policemen all armed with their Bowie knives, pistols, and hickory

William and Steven Hodge, two of his close acquaintances. The Hodge brothers were tried for murder, convicted, and sentenced on June 22: death by hanging. However, William continued to defend their innocence. This episode confirmed William's fears that anyone was at risk if a sufficient number of the General Authorities agreed. To make matters worse, on June 23, Irvine Hodge returned to Nauvoo determined to rescue his brothers. That same evening, Irvine was fatally stabbed. Before he died, when asked to identify his attackers, Irvine stated that they "were men whom he took to be friends."⁷⁰

Perhaps William's most daring effort to establish his personal power was in claiming to mediate relationships between the living and the dead—by giving the only two patriarchal blessings ever bestowed on deceased individuals in the history of the Church.⁷¹ These blessings obviously extended the already-developing concepts of proxy work so closely related to the temple. On June 30, 1845, William blessed Delilah Maxwell on behalf of the deceased Mary Maxwell, William stating that, because Delilah was Mary's "representative, the true nature of her condition" could be explained. Mary's death was a relief from mortal discomforts, and he instructed Delilah that Mary was no longer in pain and that her spirit was now "mingling with those who are made perfect."⁷² While Delilah Maxwell, as a devoted relative, acted as an agent of salvation on behalf of the dead Mary, William also represented Mary by explaining her activities to Delilah. Standing between two worlds, the patriarch provided de-

clubs. How much more too, was my surprize, when after my entrance I found the door guarded, and the man whom I had supposed a particular friend of mine, chuckling with sparkling eyes to think he had me in his power." Young had spoken with "boisterous boldness," claiming that he would "let William Smith know that he has no right to counsel this church, for I am the man!"

⁷⁰Jessee, "John Taylor Nauvoo Journal," 58, June 23, 1845.

⁷¹Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 102 note 87, have postulated that Hyrum Smith was likely already administering blessings for the deceased before William exercised this option. If this is the case, I am unaware of any historical documents that validate the claim. Instead, I argue that William saw an opportunity to expand his market as presiding patriarch by bestowing proxy blessings for the deceased, a practice that certainly was in line with other period practices, particularly those related to the temple.

⁷²Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 259.

scriptive imagery regarding the afterlife.

William pronounced the second proxy blessing on July 16, 1845, on Mary Ann Peterson in behalf of Anne B. Peterson. In this blessing, William stated: "As one of the bright stars in the firmament she is now made to shine in the kingdom of heaven and as an Angel of peace she is now ministering to those who shall be her heirs of Salvation." He continued, "and to her it has been given the Angel and guardian care of her Companion on earth to her and all of his household, and she watches over them by night and day."⁷³

It was common for William to assign the role of guardian or ministering angel to the deceased, both those beyond the grave and, as a matter of prophetic insight, to those yet living. To Louisa B. Beebe, he exclaimed, "Unto thy husband thou shalt prove a ministering angel."⁷⁴ To James Bailey on July 14, 1845, William uttered these consoling words: "Thy mother and father although dead and now sleeping in the grave, yet their spirits live and mingle with the just around the Throne of God, and their eyes are upon thee, and over all thy children, they have been appointed as ministering spirits to those who should be heirs of salvation, and have thy guardian care, it is their presence that has comforted thee, and lifted thee up in times of trouble, and preserved thee from sickness and death and keep thee from many accidents."⁷⁵

William's descriptions of these ministering or guardian spirits were commonly recognized as deceased friends, relatives, spouses, and in some instances even the Prophet Joseph Smith. In several blessings, William prophesied that the martyred Prophet would have numerous interactions with his people. While the Twelve assured the Saints that their Prophet was fully involved in the Twelve's activities,⁷⁶ some of William's blessings made the Prophet accessible to those who

⁷³Ibid., 328.

⁷⁴Ibid., 240.

⁷⁵Ibid., 315.

⁷⁶On August 8, 1844, W. W. Phelps related an experience he had had in late June: "We have hitherto walked by sight, and if a man wanted to know anything he had only to go to Brother Joseph. Joseph has gone, but he has not left us comfortless. I want to say that Brother Joseph came and enlightened me two days after he was buried. He came the same as when he was alive." Wilford Woodruff, *Journal*, 2:479, 491-92, 539, also recorded that Joseph had visited him several times in dreams. Later in 1847, Brigham

held no ecclesiastical rank.

Because of the succession crisis, with competing claims among several rival factions, the “market” for William’s assurances about Joseph Smith’s postmortal activity was particularly rich. Lyman Wight, who carried out instructions received from Joseph soon before his death to establish a Mormon community in Texas, once proclaimed, “Joseph being dead, yet speaketh.”⁷⁷ This simple phrase captures what was occurring in nearly every faction of the Church—the claims of an actively engaged, albeit dead, prophet.⁷⁸

William promised to various recipients that Joseph would appear to believers, providing direction and comfort. During June in 1845, William promised Mary Pitchforth: “Thou hast desired to see the city of Joseph and to hear his voice and his voice thou shalt hear before thy death and it shall be in a dream, he shall appear unto thee and comfort thee in thy sleep, and in thy night visions shall unfold the purpose of God to the joy of thy heart and to the settling of strange questions and to the removal of all doubts and fears.”⁷⁹ In Louisa B. Beebe’s blessing, William also promised a comforting vision that would be—if not Joseph, at least “as the voice of Joseph”—: “For thou shalt behold an angel in the dark hours of the night and in a dream he shall appear dressed in white array and he shall be unto thee as the voice of Joseph thy doubts and fears shall be removed thou shalt behold him afar off beckoning for thee to come the time shall come when thy desire shall be to depart.”⁸⁰ Similarly, Walter McAlister would “hear the voice of Joseph” who would come as McAlister’s “deliverer” when he was on the point of death saying, “Thou art welcome

Young would also report frequent visits from Joseph Smith. William S. Harwell, *Manuscript History of Brigham Young, 1847–1850* (Hanna, Utah: Collier’s Publishing Company, 1997), 35–36.

⁷⁷Lyman Wight, letter to *Northern Islander*, July 1855, P13, f79, p. 24, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

⁷⁸Christopher James Blythe, “‘Would to God I Could Tell You Who I Am’: Nineteenth-Century Mormonisms and the Apotheosis of Joseph Smith,” 2012, unpublished manuscript, copy in my possession.

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, 270.

⁸⁰Marquardt, *Early Patriarchal Blessings*, 240.

to Zion.”⁸¹ Elizabeth Rowe was promised on June 23, 1845: “Yet the Angel of God that is appointed in charge will stand by thee in all the times of thy trouble, and distress, and he shall prove unto thee as the voice of Joseph, and as a mighty deliverer shall he come and thou shalt exclaim lo and behold my deliverer has come, and one who is mighty to save and his voice shall be as the voice of mighty thunders, and many waters.”⁸²

This motif of Joseph as a prophetic comforter, especially in removing “doubts and fears,” a phrase that appears in both the Pitchforth and the Beebe blessings or as a “deliverer” as it appears in both the McAlister and the Potter blessing,⁸³ may have evolved out of rumors circulating that Smith was actually the third member of the godhead or Holy Ghost.⁸⁴ Apostle Orson Pratt, in August of 1845, refuted the folk belief, even though it would have flourished during William’s stay in office: “These are doctrines not revealed, and are neither believed nor sanctioned by the Twelve and should be rejected by every Saint.”⁸⁵

It was not only in blessings that William began to discuss those practices that had yet to be revealed to the majority of the Saints. On August 17, 1845, William preached a bold, public sermon, “The First Chapter of the Gospel by St. William,” to a Nauvoo congregation at which, for undisclosed reasons, John Taylor was the only other apostle present. Here William openly instructed the Nauvoo Saints regarding the practice of polygamy, not only violating the understanding that the practice should be kept secret (Joseph Smith spoke of it in public only to deny that it existed) but directly challenging the author-

⁸¹Ibid., 311.

⁸²Ibid., 247.

⁸³Interestingly, instances of seeing Joseph or hearing his voice reportedly occurred when the recipient was on his or her deathbed. This repeated theme seems to suggest that William saw his brother as a psychopomp, as found in many religious traditions, an immortal figure who ushers the soul of a deceased person to his or her heavenly home.

⁸⁴For more information on Joseph Smith as the Holy Ghost, see Vern G. Swanson, “The Development of the Concept of a Holy Ghost in Mormon Theology,” in *Line upon Line: Essay on Mormon Doctrine*, edited by Gary James Bergera (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), 97.

⁸⁵Orson Pratt, “Message,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (August 15, 1845): 809.

ity of the Twelve. William ridiculed their decision to conceal the practice, stating, “If a sister give me her hand upon the spiritual wife system, to share with me the fate and destinies of time and eternity, I will not be ashamed of her before the public.”⁸⁶ John Taylor had sternly rebuked William in print about six weeks earlier for overstepping his bounds as a patriarch. William may have been counting on popular support, but the negative reaction of the Twelve to his defiance made it clear that he would no longer be allowed unlimited access to the Saints; and within his own quorum, his behavior certainly destroyed any facade that William was willing to play by the rules.

During the October 1845 general conference held in the temple with benches set up on makeshift flooring, Parley P. Pratt spoke up during the sustaining votes and announced that he could not sustain William as an apostle due to his calamitous influence in the East. The congregation, after listening to Pratt, unanimously voted to drop William from both positions—apostle and patriarch. He was officially excommunicated two weeks later on October 19 and immediately left the city.

The next period of William’s life can be summed up as a continuing search for power, often playing on his lineal authority. He affiliated briefly with James J. Strang, the second most successful leader to emerge from Nauvoo’s succession crisis, who offered him the position of patriarch and apostle; but he was excommunicated for adultery in 1847. He next established his own Church, calling all Saints who had not “apostasized” by siding with Brigham Young, to gather with him in Lee County, Illinois. He attracted believers by using the Smith name, his various priesthood positions, and Joseph’s

⁸⁶Bates and Smith, *Lost Legacy*, 91. A month after the death of William’s wife, Caroline, he married Mary Jane Rollins on June 22, 1845, and was plurally sealed to Mary Ann Sheffield by Brigham Young (exact date unknown but presumably between June 22 and William’s excommunication in October. He also had four more plural wives: Mary Jones, Priscilla Mogridge, and sisters Sarah Libbey and Hannah Libbey. After his excommunication, he married Roxie Ann Grant, the younger sister of his first wife, in 1847. They had two children, then separated. Before 1858, he married Eliza Elise Sanborn, and they had four children. After her death in 1889, he married Rosanna/Rosa Lewitt Surprise. Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 875.

esoteric knowledge as he understood it.

As William had learned during his final stretch in Nauvoo, patriarchal blessings possessed a prophetic, even scriptural, character. They divulged a man's spiritual or true identity and possessed an authority promoted by his late brother. As a patriarch, William used this tool to establish influence with the Saints to gain legitimacy as Joseph Smith's successor by delegitimizing his rival. In the newspaper he published with Isaac Sheen, William vilified Brigham Young by referring to him as Pontius Pilate, claiming that the apostle had metaphorically crucified Joseph to attain his position as senior apostle and thus as head of the Church. The following section of the paper highlights an unpublished patriarchal blessing that William alleged had been given to Brigham Young by Joseph Jr. In this blessing, he claimed that Joseph had announced Brigham Young's descent as "Cain through the loins of Ham" and a "Canaanite apostle." Although African American men had been ordained to the priesthood during Joseph's lifetime, that position was shifting under Brigham Young's influence to one that asserted that the descendants of Cain were cursed and unable to hold the priesthood. As a consequence, this claim was mortally insulting. The blessing continued, referring to Young as a Judas Iscariot, "I have chosen you twelve and lo one is a devil." William closed his quotation of the blessing by averring that Young belonged to a "class of spiritual beings that transgressed in heaven and became devils."⁸⁷ Later, William would publicly excommunicate Young from his church, which he promoted as the true Latter-day Saint Church. Since Brigham Young had already excommunicated William, it is doubtful that either man changed his mind.

Although his Church would last only a few years, William experienced brief successes. In 1849, Lyman Wight offered William the presidency of his Mormon colony in Texas. Hinging on his usual claims of authority, William briefly enjoyed the privileges of a prophet. In 1850, his partnership with Sheen dissolved, with Sheen accusing William of committing adultery with his wife. William was rebaptized a Mormon in 1860 but soon withdrew.⁸⁸ When his nephew, Joseph Smith III, accepted the position of prophet and president of the "New Movement," soon renamed the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ

⁸⁷Sheen, "B. Young's Lineage," 4.

⁸⁸Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 875.

of Latter Day Saints, William, after considerable hesitation, affiliated with it and was received as a high priest on his former baptism. William hoped to be appointed presiding patriarch or apostle, but his cautious nephew declined to give him either position and, furthermore, did not invite him closer to Church headquarters. William died November 13, 1893, in Osterdock, Clayton County, Iowa.

CONCLUSION

The experience of William Smith was not dissimilar from that of many Mormons who struggled to find their footing in the chaos of the postmartyrdom period. In the potential communal disintegration that followed Joseph's death, Latter-day Saints looked to various sources to establish legitimate avenues of authority that also matched their personal interpretations of Smith's teachings. Those who possessed ecclesiastical rank (such as the Twelve) or the claim to a close association with the martyred prophet (Sidney Rigdon), or powerful spiritual experiences (James J. Strang) established a market through which legitimacy could be commodified by bartering esoteric knowledge, power, and position in exchange for stature and support.

While the accumulation of power appears to be the major stakes for which these individuals contended, I am not claiming the quest for power as a sole motivation. Rather, I use William Smith to examine methods by which that power was accumulated and legitimacy accrued. Pierre Bourdieu best captured this exchange model in his theoretical framing of cultural and symbolic capital, in which nonmaterial goods are negotiated to achieve stature or increase resources based on position—as opposed to earlier Marxist theories based on goods alone.

William Smith contended in the Nauvoo spiritual marketplace, negotiated for increased stature, including his ecclesiastical positions (apostle and patriarch), his family relationship to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and his knowledge of some of the esoteric practices and insider groups Joseph established. He used the revelatory narratives of patriarchal blessings during his six months in office to accrue this power. These scripture-like documents, while bestowed upon another person, also unveil surprisingly full information about the motives and desires of the patriarch himself. In William's case, his blessings reveal both his occasional opposition to the Church hierarchy and his closely related effort to promote his own position in the Church. These goals became immediately apparent in his June 1845 blessings

in which he claimed to be “the highest authority in the church” who possessed a “truly” or “purely patriarchal” authority that positioned him in a long line of patriarchs, beginning with Adam, Abraham, and his own father and older brother.

While this strategy appears to have been briefly influential in Nauvoo, when he wrote about it in the *Times and Seasons*, the Twelve promptly discredited his claims and redefined his position. By mid-July, all clear expressions of dissent had come to an end, leading to a period during which some of his most fascinating negotiations occurred. Publicly, William continued to oscillate between civility and outright insurrection, but his blessings pronounced between July and his excommunication in October reveal an increased marketing of esoteric knowledge related to temple ordinances—promised to the lay membership but not yet available. As was true of his inclusion of themes of death conquest in his blessings, this approach was not scandalous but demonstrated that William Smith supported the larger apostolic effort of pushing the Nauvoo Temple toward completion. This does not mean that he was not still building symbolic capital; rather, it means that he had found a way to work within the system.

Patriarchal blessings provided William with a means to participate, complement, and, as we have seen, protest within the Church body. The elaborate nature of some of his blessings were no more extravagant than those offered by Joseph Sr., who memorably promised Lorenzo Snow the ability to travel between planets and raise the dead.⁸⁹ It was when he stepped outside of the overall direction of the Twelve in May by teaching his own superiority as the “Patriarch over the Church” and again by drawing public attention to the practice of polygamy, that the Twelve took repressive measures and he began the trajectory that quickly left him outside of the Church.

⁸⁹Marquardt, *Early Mormon Patriarchal Blessings*, 94.



George Romney (left) campaigning in 1970 for Utah Congressional candidate Richard Richards with Utah State Representative Ben Fowler (my grandfather). Romney was then Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the cabinet of Richard Nixon, his one-time rival in the race for the Republican presidential nomination. Photo courtesy of Ben Fowler.

WHEN MORMONISM MATTERED LESS IN PRESIDENTIAL POLITICS: GEORGE ROMNEY'S 1968 WINDOW OF POSSIBILITIES

J. B. Haws

GEORGE ROMNEY WAS BORN IN THE Mormon colonies of Chihuahua, Mexico, the grandson of a polygamist. Five decades later, his face was on the cover of *Time* magazine. He was president of American Motors by then, busily promoting a fuel-efficient Rambler as the answer to too many “dinosaurs”—his term for large, gas-guzzling cars. He won the governorship of Michigan in 1962, 1964, and 1966. He had become, in all likelihood, the most publicly recognizable Mormon since Brigham Young. And for much of 1967, national polling put him at or near the top of a heap of presidential hopefuls.¹

Yet in a matter of only a few weeks in late 1967, George Romney went from front-runner to also-ran. On the eve of the first presidential

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¹George Romney is featured on the cover of *Time* magazine, April 6, 1959, and in an article, “The Dinosaur Hunter,” in that same issue. For *Newsweek*'s analysis of the poll data in the spring of 1967, see “Romney's

primary in early 1968, he abruptly ended his campaign. It was a fast fall from first place (in some polls) to footnote in the history of presidential politics. It seemed only natural that George Romney's fellow Mormons had to ask, Did his religion sink his hopes? Did his Mormonism catch up to him, so to speak? Did his minority faith prove to be too unsettling for voters?

His contemporaries were mixed in their answers, with one observer concluding that Romney's religion was a "handicap" that caused more "damage . . . than his presidential aspirations could withstand."² At about the same time, however, another observer, who had worked on Romney's campaign, countered that Romney's faith fueled his initial popularity as the "antithesis" of President Lyndon Johnson.³ There was a greater consensus among contemporary analysts that the 1960s saw a new level of attention to Mormonism's position of

Week," *Newsweek*, May 1, 1967, 20–21: "Does Michigan's evangelistic Gov. George Romney have the staying power to capture the 1968 Republican Presidential nomination? Right now, Romney is the clear leader in the polls, the professed choice of most influential party moderates and the most active non-candidate on the political landscape."

²See Dennis L. Lythgoe, "The 1968 Presidential Decline of George Romney: Mormonism or Politics?" *BYU Studies* 11, no. 3 (Spring 1971): 240: "George Romney's politics and his piety were inseparable, and the damage was more than his presidential aspiration could withstand." Lythgoe's piece captures the contemporary political climate, but he "admittedly" limited the scope of his study to "popular magazines" (220). The contention here is that, given additional hindsight and sources, even his tentative "yes" should be reassessed. Although Lythgoe argued for the role religion played in Romney's sinking fortunes, he noted that "many analysts, including Romney himself, have blamed his political decline on his famous 'brainwashing' statement made after a tour of Viet Nam" (220).

³Richard Melvin Eyre, "George Romney in 1968: From Front-Runner to Drop-Out, An Analysis of Cause" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), esp. 66–73, saw Romney's image of honesty and morality as the "antithesis" to Lyndon Johnson that many Republicans sought. His insightful and detailed list of reasons for Romney's failure did not include Mormonism. In Eyre's opinion, the press was eager to show that Romney did not grasp the issues confronting the nation, and hence focused on the "brainwashing" comment. Dale Pelo, "Mormonism in National Periodicals, 1961–1970" (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1973), 42–43, agreed

not ordaining black men to the priesthood and that this attention caused a serious downturn in the public standing of the LDS Church.⁴ It seems only natural to wonder about the degree to which George Romney may have suffered by association. Public opinion is always a moving target, so it is difficult to say with complete certainty what is on the mind of the masses. Yet judging from the range of evidence that is observable, and weighing that evidence in connection with earlier studies' heavy focus on national periodicals, the best answer seems to be that Romney's widely known religious affiliation was, in effect, a non-issue in his campaign. Just as significant, it seems that the impact of the growing priesthood controversy on both the governor's reputation and the reputation of the Church generally was more nuanced—and actually less influential—than might be supposed. There is much to commend Randall Balmer's assertion that George Romney is "exhibit A" in an era when religion mattered very little in national politics.⁵

George Romney's prime time on the American stage was post-John F. Kennedy, yet pre-Religious Right. The denominational mood of the day was one of ecumenism; the Republican Party's mood was one of flux. And the image of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the 1960s was perhaps best characterized as one of benign wholesomeness—this was, as one observer has memorably put it, the "golden era of Mormonism."⁶ When the body of evidence centered on George Romney's candidacy is held up and examined against this backdrop, it becomes even clearer that a politically clumsy (yet hon-

with Eyre and challenged "Lythgoe's conclusion" as "in error. . . . Romney's piety was not his chief problem." Pelo showed that the percentage of Romney-related articles in national periodicals that also mentioned Mormonism *declined* from 1966 (47 percent) to 1967 (36 percent), suggesting that Mormonism was *less* prominent when Romney's popularity dropped.

⁴Dennis Leo Lythgoe, "The Changing Image of Mormonism in Periodical Literature" (Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1969), 267: "Appraisal [of Mormons] became . . . very favorable in the 1950s and reverted to severe criticism in the 1960s." Pelo, "Mormonism in National Periodicals," 83: "The image of Mormonism in national periodicals during the period of 1961–1970 was of a slightly positive nature, but the last five years of the decade were negative." See his Chart 1, p. 75.

⁵Randall Balmer, *God in the White House: How Faith Shaped the Presidency from John F. Kennedy to George W. Bush* (New York: HarperOne, 2008), 156.

⁶Bruce L. Olsen, Interview with Jonice Hubbard, September 8, 2006,

est) statement about the Vietnam War doomed his presidential aspirations; his Mormonism did not.

POST-JOHN F. KENNEDY

When George Romney first entered the race for governor of Michigan in 1962, *The Nation* called his religious affiliation an “asset.” George Romney, like other Mormons in the news, seemed the very picture of *Coronet* magazine’s celebratory headline: “Those Amazing Mormons.”⁷ Pioneer work ethic, stable families, old-fashioned values, aversion to vice—these were the featured qualities that made Romney’s “personal life,” as *The Nation* put it, “impeccable.”⁸

In 1967, 75 percent of voters polled by Gallup stated that they would not hesitate to vote for a Mormon for president, all other qualifications being equal; but the really key figure in that survey was that only 17 percent said definitely that they would *not* vote for a Mormon.⁹ In contrast, in 2007 or 2011, surveys repeatedly showed that up to twice as many Americans were hesitant to vote for a Mor-

transcript in Hubbard “Pioneers in Twentieth Century Mormon Media: Oral Histories of Latter-day Saint Electronic and Public Relations Professionals” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 2007), 121, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/ETD/id/1260> (accessed November 2, 2012). Olsen retired in 2008 as the managing director of the Church’s Public Affairs Department.

⁷Andrew Hamilton, “Those Amazing Mormons,” *Coronet*, April 1952, 26–30.

⁸B. J. Widick, “Romney: New Hope for the G.O.P.?” *Nation*, February 3, 1962, 97.

⁹Gallup Poll #744, question 15g, April 19–24, 1967, accessed via the *Gallup Brain* database; accessible for subscribers at <http://brain.gallup.com/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=AIPO0744&p=4> (accessed November 2, 2012). It queries: “There’s always much discussion about the qualifications of presidential candidates—their education, age, race, religion, and the like. . . . If your party nominated a generally well-qualified man for President and he happened to be . . . a Mormon . . . would you vote for him?” 3,519 answered in this distribution: Yes (75.11%); No (16.79%); Don’t know (8.10%). It stands to reason that many of those polled would have had George Romney in mind when asked about a Mormon candidate, considering his prominence by the spring of 1967.

mon presidential candidate.¹⁰

When the issue of religion first came up in the 1962 Michigan governor's race, George Romney's opponent swiftly called the topic out of bounds. Incumbent John Swainson, according to *Time* magazine, "rebuked" one such critic (the president of Michigan's AFL-CIO), and emphatically requested that "the discussion of religion [be] eliminated as a campaign matter." That kind of dismissal or distancing was not then, nor would be now, unexpected from a savvy candidate, but his rebuke seemed to represent something larger in terms of prevailing attitudes. *Time* went on to complain about a week when "discussion raged irrelevantly around the tenets of the Mormon Church."¹¹ The fact that *Time* dismissed such "discussion" as "irrelevant" says much about politics and religion in this post-Kennedy, Vatican II decade.¹²

Religion, of course, had *not* seemed irrelevant in the early

¹⁰A 2007 Harris poll showed "twenty-nine percent of Republicans . . . probably or definitely would not vote for a Mormon for president," in Noah Feldman, "What Is It about Mormonism?," *New York Times Magazine*, January 6, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/06/magazine/06mormonism-t.html?scp=1&sq=What%20is%20it%20about%20Mormonism%20Noah%20Feldman&st=cse> (accessed November 2, 2012); also Kenneth Woodward, "The Presidency's Mormon Moment," *New York Times*, April 9, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/09/opinion/09woodward.html?_r=1&oref=slogin (accessed November 2, 2012). He reported: "Among those who identify themselves as liberal, almost half say they would not support a Mormon for president." An *ABC News/Washington Post* poll in December 2006 found that 35 percent of those surveyed would be "less likely" to vote for a Mormon, and an *NBC News/Wall Street Journal* survey that same month was even bleaker, with 53 percent of the respondents saying "they were very uncomfortable or have some reservations about voting for a presidential candidate who is Mormon"; cited in Howard Berkes, "Faith Could Be Hurdle in Romney's White House Bid," *NPR's Morning Edition*, February 8, 2007, transcript, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=7245768> (accessed November 2, 2012).

¹¹"Michigan: The Mormon Issue," *Time*, March 2, 1962, 21.

¹²An unsigned editorial in the *Christian Century* tended to agree that religious affiliation was irrelevant when compared to candidates' stated positions, whether that candidate was Mormon George Romney, Catholic John F. Kennedy, or Quaker Richard Nixon. See "The Book of Mormon En-

months of the 1960 presidential race. As Massachusetts Senator John F. Kennedy sought to become the first Roman Catholic to be elected U.S. president, pamphlets appeared with titles such as “Can a Man be a Loyal Roman Catholic and a Good President of the United States?” (The pamphleteer, Dallas pastor W. A. Criswell, did not think so.) Paul Blanshard and Carl McIntire linked (if only by comparison) Catholic power with Communist power. Prominent ministers like Norman Vincent Peale expressed doubts about the sincerity of Catholic assent to First Amendment separation of church and state.¹³ The furor was so inescapable that Kennedy finally (and now famously) stood before a crowd of Protestant ministers at the Rice Hotel in Houston, Texas, in September 1960 and forcefully declared that, if elected president, his loyalty would be to the Constitution of the United States. He spoke to still-rampant nativist fears that a Catholic chief executive might defer to the wishes of a foreign power (the Pope in Rome), or give preference to parochial schools over public education (through tax breaks for Catholic parents), or bring to pass any of the other dire predic-

ters Politics,” *Christian Century*, March 28, 1962, 382: “Must candidates for high office in the U.S. either be secularists or deny some of their church’s ultimate teachings? Would this whole matter go unnoticed except for the potential for exploitation from both sides when religion is mentioned?”

¹³Sidney Blumenthal, “The Religious Right and Republicans,” discusses Reverend W. A. Criswell’s anti-Catholic and anti-Kennedy pamphlet, in Richard John Neuhaus and Michael Cromartie, eds., *Piety and Politics: Evangelicals and Fundamentalists Confront the World* (Washington, D.C.: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1987), 271. A historical sidenote for modern readers is that one of Criswell’s successors to the leadership of the First Baptist Church of Dallas was Robert Jeffress, who would gain notoriety for his comments about Mitt Romney and the “cult” status of Mormonism in October 2011. Balmer, *God in the White House*, 12, notes that Paul Blanshard’s 1949 *American Freedom and Catholic Power*, “became a best-selling book; Beacon Press ordered eleven printings in as many months.” On Carl McIntire, see Blumenthal, “The Religious Right and Republicanism,” 277. On Norman Vincent Peale, see Balmer, *God in the White House*, 25–32. Patrick Allitt, *Religion in America since 1945: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 65–66, comments that “anti-Catholicism was widespread in America during the 1940s and 1950s, and socially respectable too.”

tions found in colorful anti-Catholic campaign literature.¹⁴

His memorable lines (“It is apparently necessary for me to state once again—not what kind of church I believe in, for that should be important only to me—but what kind of America I believe in”) were so persuasive that they flavored the political discourse for a decade and a half’s worth of election cycles. His speech (and victory) made any hint of religious divisiveness in the public square come off as distasteful.¹⁵

George Romney, importantly, also played a supporting role in setting that tone. Two years before he ran for governor and six months before candidate Kennedy’s Houston speech, Romney served on a national Fair Campaign Practices Committee. The make-up of the committee reflected the strong post-World War II push toward interreligious dialogue and cooperation; the highly ecumenical group counted as members “prominent rabbis, Catholics, various Orthodox and Protestant leaders, and Carl F. H. Henry, editor of *Christianity Today*, the flagship magazine of evangelicalism.”¹⁶ It is not surprising that Romney would be a natural choice to represent Mormonism in this endeavor. Not only had he served as CEO of American Motors since 1954, but he also had a background in politics from his earliest job as a Washington lobbyist for the aluminum industry. By 1960, his name was being mentioned as a Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate; and at the same time, he was the presiding officer over a number of widespread Latter-day Saint congregations that made up the church’s Detroit Stake.¹⁷ Romney’s work on this committee would soon take on a special relevance to his own political career.

After its March 1960 meetings, this Fair Campaign Practices

¹⁴See Allitt, *Religion in America since 1945*, 8–10, 65–67, for the persistence of anti-Catholicism in the United States and factors contributing to its mid-twentieth-century decline, including the migration of Catholics from urban ethnic enclaves into suburban neighborhoods, interaction between Catholic and Protestant soldiers during World War I and World War II, etc. For broader context, see Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972), 566–68, 900–901, 1006–13.

¹⁵For a transcript and a video recording of John F. Kennedy’s speech to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association, see <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/jfkhoustonministers.html> (accessed August 11, 2012).

¹⁶Balmer, *God in the White House*, 14.

¹⁷John Thomas, “George Romney,” in Arnold K. Garr, Donald Q.

Committee issued its “Special Statement on Religion in the 1960 Campaign.” Its five recommended guiding “principles” centered on the premise that “no candidate for public office should be opposed or supported because of his particular religious affiliation”—therefore, “a campaign for a public office is not an opportunity to vote for one religion against another.”¹⁸ The spirit of this statement and especially Kennedy’s Houston speech reverberated widely. When Romney appeared on *Meet the Press* in October 1967, the topic of Mormonism was not even broached.¹⁹

Of course, this point can be overstated, and it could be construed to mean that George Romney’s religion was somehow anonymous during his campaigns. Quite the opposite was true. George Romney’s name and his faith were often in the same sentence. As *Christianity Today* put it in 1969, “his name and Mormonism have become fused in the popular mind.”²⁰ People knew Romney was a Mormon, but, as Randall Balmer has asserted, it was as if “religion simply did not”—or because of the Kennedy precedent, *should* not—“enter into the political calculus.”²¹

From its earliest days, Mormonism had repeatedly sparked widespread curiosity—and that continued to be true during George Rom-

Cannon, and Richard O. Cowan, eds., *Encyclopedia of Latter-day Saint History* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 1041–42. See also Clark R. Mollenhoff, *George Romney: Mormon in Politics* (New York: Meredith Press, 1968), 47–50, 171.

¹⁸Quoted in Balmer, *God in the White House*, 14–15.

¹⁹*Meet the Press*, October 15, 1967, transcript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

²⁰“Mormons Visibly Staking a Witness,” *Christianity Today*, May 9, 1969, 48.

²¹Balmer, *God in the White House*, 156. The fact that in April 1967 a national Catholic newspaper “called on all religious publications” to reject bias in their reporting on Romney speaks to the virtual impossibility of Governor Swainson’s request that religion be eliminated from campaign coverage. Yet significantly, the issue was the Mormon policy of not ordaining black men to the priesthood. The weekly *Ave Maria* (printed at Notre Dame University) asked “the religious press” to reject the association of Mormonism’s black policy with Romney’s politics as religious “prejudice” and praised how that press had “overwhelmingly rejected” anti-Catholic bias di-

ney's run. Still, curiosity and criticism are different matters, and public perception is as much a product of tone as it is of topic. Another speech by John F. Kennedy, this one given in the Salt Lake Tabernacle in 1963, represented well that tone of public discourse about Mormons in the 1960s. President Kennedy told his audience that "of all the stories of American pioneers and settlers, none is more inspiring than the Mormon trail. The qualities of the founders of this community are the qualities that we seek in America, the qualities which we like to feel this country has, courage, patience, faith, self-reliance, perseverance, and above all, an unflagging determination to see right prevail. . . . As the Mormons succeeded, so America can succeed, if we will not give up or turn back."²² When Mormonism did come up during George Romney's political campaigns, it most often came up in these celebratory and patriotic terms. Not only did that tone reflect a *political* aversion to what seemed at the time to be irrelevant sectarianism, but it also was born out of the spirit of ecumenism that infused post-World War II American Christianity. There were, of course, many Americans who opposed Mormonism on deeply held religious grounds, but their voices did not yet receive prominent play on the nation's political airwaves.

PRE-RELIGIOUS RIGHT: A DECADE OF ECUMENISM

In early 1968, Anthony Hoekema, professor of theology at Calvin College (Grand Rapids, Michigan) worried, in the pages of *Christianity Today*: "Many people have the impression that the Mormon teachings are not basically different from those of historic Christianity." That line is very telling. As he put it, the "Christ of Mormonism is not the Christ of scripture," such that "we cannot classify Mormon teachings with those of historic Christianity."²³ Hoekema's pointed criticisms demonstrate clearly that there was, in George Romney's

rected toward Kennedy. See "Catholic Paper Decries Bias in Weighing Romney '68 Bid," *New York Times*, April 4, 1967, 48.

²²Remarks by President John F. Kennedy, September 26, 1963, Salt Lake Tabernacle, as quoted in Michael K. Winder, *Presidents and Prophets: The Story of America's Presidents and the LDS Church* (American Fork, Utah: Covenant Communications, 2007), 292.

²³Anthony A. Hoekema, "Ten Questions to Ask the Mormons," *Christianity Today*, January 19, 1968, 10. Hoekema had published in 1963 *The*

day, religious opposition to Mormons; but Hoekema's words reinforce perhaps a more salient point—that the rationale behind such opposition was not well known or appreciated.

To be sure, uncertainty about where Mormonism fit in the family of world faiths cropped up in the 1960s. Missionary guides at the 1964 New York World's Fair Mormon Pavilion recorded that one of the five most commonly asked questions by the pavilion's visitors was, "Why have we been led to believe that the Mormons are not Christians?"²⁴ But the question didn't have the political potency that it would carry decades later. More common, it seemed, was the generic assessment of the more liberal and ecumenical publication *Christian Century*, which specifically referred to Mormons as Christians.²⁵ George Romney was even hailed as "Churchman of the Year" in 1969 by the interfaith Religious Heritage of America, and *Christianity Today* ventured that "few would question his receiving the award."²⁶

However, a debate about the religious legitimacy of Mormonism was rising; that it did not make waves in media coverage of the 1968 campaign was certainly due in part to the spirit of the Second Vatican Council.²⁷ From 1962 to 1965, Catholic bishops (and observers from other churches) had convened in Rome for a series of conferences that reshaped Catholicism's stance toward other Christian con-

Four Major Cults: Christian Science, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Seventh-day Adventism (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1963).

²⁴Nathaniel Smith Kogan, "The Mormon Pavilion: Mainstreaming the Saints at the New York World's Fair, 1964–65," *Journal of Mormon History* 35, no. 4 (Fall 2009): 36.

²⁵E.g., the magazine's editorial board refers to the LDS Church as a "Christian body" in "Pigskin Justice and Mormon Theology," *Christian Century*, January 21, 1970, 67.

²⁶"Mormons: Visibly Staking a Witness," 48.

²⁷There were exceptions, but these articles were noteworthy because they were so anomalous: See, for example, Warren Boroson, "George Romney: Man and Mormon," *Fact*, May-June 1967, 13, who openly ridiculed Joseph Smith and assailed George Romney's judgment for following such a "psychopath." A copy of this article appears in the George Romney Resource Files, 1967–71, LDS Church History Library. It is difficult, however, to judge the extent of *Fact's* influence, since this was the same periodical that lost a libel suit brought against it by Barry Goldwater for "fabricat-

fessions along the lines of openness, tolerance, and cooperation. This feeling was reciprocated by other denominations, signaling, as two prominent historians put it, “the beginning of a new era in relation of the Churches to one another.”²⁸ A number of American Protestant denominations put aside differences and joined together in interfaith organizations in the 1960s. Vatican II was in the air, contributing to a public reluctance to split theological hairs.

Yet another dynamic was also at work here. Those religionists in the 1960s who were most likely to oppose Mormonism on theological grounds—that is, fundamentalist, evangelical Christians—were also likely to be conscientiously avoiding politics.²⁹ For many such fundamentalists, a fear of worldly encroachment had motivated an early twentieth-century withdrawal to the private sanctuaries of church organizations and communities of like-minded individuals.³⁰ Their dismay over changing mores even prompted some fundamentalists to shun

ing and doctoring quotations” and psychiatric evaluations to insinuate that Goldwater’s psyche matched that of Adolf Hitler. Robert Alan Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 223, 390 note 69.

²⁸Edwin Gaustad and Leigh Schmidt, *The Religious History of America: The Heart of the American Story from Colonial Times to Today*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), 395.

²⁹As most writers use the term, “fundamentalism” is a particular wavelength on the spectrum of evangelical Christianity, yet the two movements—especially in their twentieth-century American context—are often treated interchangeably. Fundamentalists, as George Marsden memorably characterized them, are evangelicals who are “angry about something.” Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans Publishing, 1991), 1. Far from derogatory, this description, Marsden noted, was even “adopted” by “Jerry Falwell . . . as a quick definition of fundamentalism that reporters are likely to quote.” In this sense, “fundamentalist” has most often designated evangelicals who set themselves apart through stricter behavioral guidelines.

³⁰On the pivotal importance of the Scopes trial in the development of a “separated out” fundamentalist subculture, see Susan Friend Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 61–78; quotation on p. 62. See also Randall Balmer, *Religion in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 92: “The Scopes trial of 1925 had convinced American evangeli-

dancing, make-up, modern clothing styles, and popular music and movies. Importantly, their withdrawal from public life often included a deliberate retirement from political involvement. Instead, many focused on the impulse that has always been at the very heart of conservative Christianity—the drive to evangelize, to win souls for Christ.

This retreat also reflected these Christians' pervasive pessimism about the odds of passing legislation that could stop the world's march toward degeneration. The influential theology of premillennialism convinced many evangelical Christians that only the Second Coming of Christ and the concomitant destruction of wickedness could refashion society for the promised millennium of peace. Individual spiritual readiness, not social activism, was the only hope.³¹ A young Reverend Jerry Falwell, in a well-known 1965 sermon, "Ministers and Marchers," chastised colleagues who seemed too entrenched in politics. "We have a message of redeeming grace through a crucified and risen Lord. This message is designed to go right to the heart of man and there meet his deep spiritual need. Nowhere are we commissioned to reform the externals. We are not told to wage wars against bootleggers, liquor stores, gamblers, murderers, prostitutes, racketeers, prejudiced persons or institutions, or any other existing

cals that the larger world was corrupt and hostile to their interests, and they responded by retreating from that world into a subculture of churches, denominations, Bible institutes, and colleges of their own making."

³¹Glenn H. Utter and John W. Storey, *The Religious Right*, 2d ed. (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2001), 353, defines premillennialism as "the belief that steadily deteriorating world conditions (wars and rumors of wars) will precede the second coming, at which time Jesus will establish a thousand-year reign. . . . This viewpoint is generally more harmonious with a conservative, pessimistic assessment of contemporary world conditions." In contrast, "postmillennialism" is "the belief that steadily improving world conditions will culminate in the second coming. By this interpretation, Jesus will return after a millennium of human progress. This optimistic viewpoint . . . reinforced the reform efforts of liberal social gospel ministers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (353). Walter Russell Mead, "God's Country?," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006, <http://www.foreignaffairs.org> (accessed November 29, 2007), provides an overview of liberal, evangelical, and fundamentalist Protestantism, as well as the influence of pre- and postmillennial theology on each tradition's respective worldview.

evil as such. I feel that we need to get off the streets and back into the pulpits and into our prayer rooms.”³²

For this reason, Reverend Falwell said he “would find it impossible to stop preaching the pure saving gospel of Jesus Christ, and begin doing anything else—including fighting Communism, or participating in civil-rights reforms.” Many of his co-religionists did not even vote in presidential elections before the 1970s. As one writer saw it, “Neither [Billy] Graham nor the right-wing preachers had much success during the 1950s or 1960s in stirring the Evangelicals to political action. Several studies during the period showed ‘without exception . . . that evangelicals were less inclined toward political participation than were their less evangelical counterparts.’”³³

Of course, many evangelicals would do a political about-face in the late 1970s, for a variety of reasons. Supreme Court decisions that seemed to be anti-public prayer and pro-pornography had convinced many conservative Christians that they had to engage in a political system that now threatened to encroach upon their way of life.³⁴ Plus, world events, especially related to Israel’s tenuous position in the Middle East, seemed to have biblical, last-days ramifications, such that the preservation of the United States as a Christian nation seemed to take on apocalyptic significance.³⁵ Reverend Falwell himself rose to the forefront of such political mobilizing, launching the Moral Majority organization and recruiting a reported four million new voters for the

³²Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 22.

³³Balmer, *Religion in Twentieth-Century America*, 389. A. James Reichly, “The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt,” in Neuhaus and Cromartie, eds., *Piety and Politics*, 74. Reichly quoted Robert Wuthnow, “Political Rebirth of American Evangelicalism,” in Wuthnow and Robert C. Liebman, eds., *The New Christian Right* (Hawthorne, N.Y.: Aldine Books, 1983), 168–69.

³⁴For a summary of three cases (*Engel v. Vitale* in 1962, *School District of Abingdon Township v. Schempp*, and *Murray v. Curlett* in 1963), see Allitt, *Religion in America*, 68–69. See also Reichly, “The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt,” 76. Balmer, *God in the White House*, 95–96, discusses *Green v. Connally*, a district court ruling that nullified the tax-exempt status of Christian schools like Bob Jones University, because of their segregationist admissions policy. Balmer sees this case as galvanizing many Christians into political activism.

³⁵Evangelist Jack Van Impe called events in the Middle East “God’s

1980 election.³⁶ Remarkably, “a Gallup survey in 1980 discovered that [evangelicals] were more likely to be registered to vote than nonevangelicals, despite being overrepresented in demographic groups that historically have been relatively low in political participation.”³⁷

But this rise of the Religious Right lay in the future in 1968, so that the burgeoning counter-cult movement and its anti-Mormon thrust were still largely confined to an evangelical subculture, far from national headlines.³⁸ Perhaps nothing underscores that situation more clearly than a collection of interviews, preserved in the papers of George Romney’s good friend and fellow Mormon, J. Willard Marriott. The Romney team conducted dozens of exploratory interviews with county and state party chairs, congressmen, business leaders, and press representatives nationwide, state by state, to assess local and regional feelings about a possible presidential campaign. Staffers then prepared summaries of those interviews (including numerous direct quotations) to give George Romney and his advisers a feel for the political pulse of the country in late November and December 1966. The collection contains reports for twenty-six states. Significantly—unexpectedly—reports on only *five* of these interviews, out of

‘timepieces.’” Quoted in Robert Alan Goldberg, *Enemies Within: The Culture of Conspiracy in Modern America* (Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press, 1996), 74. See also Stephen Zunes, “Strange Bedfellows: The Curious Alliance between Menachem Begin and the Christian Right,” *The Progressive*, November 1981, 29: “The theological explanation is straightforward enough: It rests on the fundamentalist belief that an ingathering of Jews to biblical Palestine and the establishment of a Jewish commonwealth must precede the second coming of Christ. In this view, the creation of modern Israel represents the fulfillment of biblical prophecy.” Zunes also quoted evangelical Christians giving reasons for supporting Israel: “Israel’s got to be strong for the final battle,” organizer Elizabeth Smith said. High Adventure Ministries saw their “mission” as “[preparing] the Jewish soul for the coming of the Messiah.”

³⁶Adam Clymer, “Bush Says No Single Group Gave Reagan His Victory,” *New York Times*, November 18, 1980, B10.

³⁷Quoted in Reichly, “The Evangelical and Fundamentalist Revolt,” 74.

³⁸Walter Martin, for example, first published *The Maze of Mormonism* in 1962, and *The Kingdom of the Cults* in 1965.

more than a hundred (even from the traditional geographic strongholds of conservative Christianity), mention Romney's religion. And only *three* of those five express anything like concern over voters' potential hesitation because Romney was a Mormon.³⁹

Mormonism was seen as a political bonus in at least two states. As might be expected, the interviewers found ready support for Romney among his co-religionists in Utah. But the suggestion that the Mormon vote would be a significant factor in Oregon led one observer there to foresee a Romney victory in that state, too.⁴⁰

The governor of Arkansas's press representative said, "Romney's religion could give him some trouble in the Bible Belt. They figure he belongs to some abnormal religion." Yet that same representative still declared, "I think Republicans can win with Romney and not with Nixon."⁴¹ A former governor of New Hampshire who was an avowed Nixon supporter complained that Romney was "sanctimonious," that he "[wore] his religion on his sleeve," and that he had "to be more than an itinerant preacher."⁴² Another prominent Republican in that state (and Romney booster) worried that several well-known Mormons there who thought they "own[ed] Romney" could "embarrass him."⁴³ The Republican Party chairman for a county in New Jersey expressed that "some folks don't like the Mormon bit," even as his counterpart in another county "predict[ed] that Romney

³⁹"Political Records: George Romney–Poll Data," Box 167, fds. 11–13, J. Willard Marriott Papers, Special Collections, Marriott Library, University of Utah (hereafter Marriott Papers). The collection includes reports from Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Georgia, Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and Washington.

⁴⁰"Oregon," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 12, 3: "The Mormon influence here is considerable."

⁴¹Willard (Lefty) Hawkins, in "Arkansas," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 11, 2.

⁴²Wes Powell, in "New Hampshire," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 12, 4.

⁴³William Treat, in "New Hampshire," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 12, 3.

will get the New Jersey delegates.”⁴⁴ That was the extent of Mormon-related comments in these interview reports.

It is readily apparent that not all of those interviewed—not even most of those interviewed—were decided Romney supporters; many planned to back Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, or favorite-son candidates like Charles Percy of Illinois. Still, positive appraisals of Romney’s image were far more common than negative comments. The most dominant favorable opinion was that George Romney was a winner, and the Republican Party wanted a winner. Over and over, these GOP representatives worried that Richard Nixon, though well qualified to serve the nation, would not be able to escape the “loser” label. Nationwide, party leaders judged Romney’s morality, his optimism, his family values—the virtues that seemed to repeatedly color the public portrait of Mormons—as working for his benefit.

AN EVOLVING REPUBLICAN PARTY

Apparently, Mormonism almost never came up in the pre-campaign interviews, but Barry Goldwater almost always did. By far the most prevalent concern about George Romney shared by these local Republican leaders was Romney’s very public refusal to endorse Goldwater’s nomination in 1964. Goldwater still enjoyed strong support in the party, and many felt that Romney’s earlier stance was a stinging betrayal. The Republican Party was, in these years, in the midst of a transformation. The Goldwater camp had been motivated by a conservative ideology that favored a strict interpretation of the Constitution, one that limited federal powers to those granted explicitly in that document. This platform resonated widely and energized a conservative groundswell that would result in future election-day successes, even though Goldwater himself suffered a defeat in 1964 of historic proportions.⁴⁵

Romney, on the other hand, was a flag bearer for the moderate wing of the GOP. (Romney reportedly waffled, initially, about

⁴⁴Chairman quoted in “New Jersey,” Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 12, 3–4.

⁴⁵Pelo, “Mormonism in National Periodicals, 1961–1970,” 43, argued for the negative impact that Romney’s conflict with Goldwater had on Romney’s election fortunes, especially among Republican Party leaders. For the conservative-moderate divide in the party over Goldwater’s nomination and Romney’s position, see Goldberg, *Barry Goldwater*, 194–97,

whether to run for governor as a Republican or a Democrat in 1962).⁴⁶ As a senator, Barry Goldwater, true to his libertarian leanings, had voted against the 1964 Civil Rights Act on grounds of questionable constitutionality. George Romney took exception to that stand and had argued for stronger civil rights-related planks in the 1964 party platform, amendments that were defeated at the convention. In the end, Romney's "liberal" positions, especially on civil rights, were far more disconcerting than Mormonism to many of the Republican leaders interviewed by the Romney team in late 1966.

As might be expected, the exploratory interviews conducted in the South looked least promising for Romney; but perhaps less expected (especially for readers in 2013), this unenthusiastic response was not, apparently, because of a Bible-belt reaction to perceived Mormon eccentricities. Rather, local Republicans there worried that a Romney-led national ticket would sink state and county GOP candidates. The Romney representative who conducted interviews in Mississippi found that local party officials disliked Romney for two reasons: he "acted like a spoiled brat in 1964," and "everybody remembers the picture of the governor of Michigan marching down the street in a civil rights demonstration. Not even Lyndon Johnson has done that."⁴⁷ Georgians who were interviewed saw Romney's rift with Goldwater as "the kiss of death," concluding that he "couldn't carry a state in the South" because "he's such a liberal," so much so that "from a racial standpoint, he's never been given much credit in Georgia for being strongly conservative on the race issue."⁴⁸

Similar complaints about Romney's liberal race-related politics also surfaced in interviews conducted in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina, and Ohio. The irony is profound. A Mormon in

202-6, 220-21, 232-37. See also David W. Reinhard, *The Republican Right since 1945* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1983), esp. 216-18, the 1966 election victories of conservative, Goldwater-type Republicans.

⁴⁶Michael Kranish and Scott Helman, *The Real Romney* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012), 23.

⁴⁷Former state chairman Wirt A. Yerger Jr., in "Mississippi," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 12, 1.

⁴⁸Mrs. Charles Brooks, vice-chairwoman of the Party, and State Senator Oliver Bateman, in "Georgia," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 11, 3.

the late sixties was the Republican Party's highest-profile pro-civil-rights candidate, a reality that complicates any simple appraisal of the media's treatment of the LDS Church and race relationships—and race relationships, in the press's view, formed the most troubling aspect of Mormonism.

**MORMONISM'S "GOLDEN ERA,"
RACIAL CONTROVERSIES NOTWITHSTANDING**

To be sure, George Romney's prominence essentially introduced national readers to the Mormon priesthood prohibition issue, and there were some hard-hitting media pieces, concurrent with his political career, that decried the Church's policy in strong language.⁴⁹ But despite one contemporary's assertion that "[Romney's] church affiliation was unquestionably detrimental since the Negro doctrine made him appear less credible in matters of race," it is not "unquestionably"

⁴⁹"Michigan: The Mormon Issue," *Time*, March 2, 1962, 21: "Being a Mormon has never been a political liability in the past . . . but George Romney is being touted as a promising contender for the 1964 G.O.P. presidential nomination—and on the national scene his religion might stir up a real controversy, just as . . . Kennedy's Catholicism did in 1960. Around Michigan last week the word was being spread that the Mormon Church looks on Negroes as an inferior race, cursed by God." Compare, for example, Richard O. Cowan's "Mormonism in National Periodicals, [1851–1960]" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1961) with Dale Pelo's parallel study of articles from the 1960s. Race was not even a category of analysis in Cowan's work, whereas it became a dominant theme in articles on Mormonism in the 1960s. See Table 4 in Pelo, "Mormonism in National Periodicals," 82. It is difficult to know how well known the Mormon priesthood policy was in the mid-1960s. Wendell Peabody, "The Saints and Race," *Christian Century*, June 9, 1965, 756, reported that, in 1965, singer Joan Baez was not aware of the policy until only a few hours before her concert in the Salt Lake Tabernacle was scheduled to begin. She decided to play the concert, but announced that she would not return to that venue until the Church reversed its policy toward blacks—and, incidentally, toward smokers and drinkers. George Romney knew the potential implications of his political prominence in connection with the priesthood issue; see Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2005), 339–40, for a report of a 1962 conversation between the First Presidency and George Romney, who was then contemplating running for governor in Michigan.

clear that even this, the principal Mormon-related controversy of George Romney's day, significantly damaged his reputation. In fact, that same observer, in the same paragraph, admitted that, "surprisingly enough, the Negro issue did not reach proportions many had predicted." That admission alone hints at the complexity involved.⁵⁰

In the late sixties, national attitudes toward civil rights were still very mixed. Martin Luther King's famous description of the country's most segregated hour—the hour of Sunday worship—was undisputed. Racial integration of church services and membership was problematic for a number of denominations. While it could be argued that the "separate but equal" philosophy behind segregationist policies did not restrict black religious participation and leadership in the same way that the Mormon priesthood policy did, the persistence of segregated churches at least spoke to an entrenched prejudice that touched many faith groups. Though Jerry Falwell, for example, later stated that his heart began to change in the mid-1960s about racial integration, his Thomas Road Baptist Church did not admit black members until "sometime around 1970."⁵¹ *Christian Century* issued several sharp editorials calling on Mormon leaders to reverse their policy concerning the ordination of blacks. It is telling that, in two cases, the Mormon-focused editorials appeared on the same pages as other editorials rebuking the University of Mississippi in one case, and then several Baptist colleges in another, for their refusals to comply with civil rights statutes.⁵²

Polls from the era confirm the widespread divergence of opinion about race relations, including those in a religious context. One

⁵⁰Lythgoe, "The 1968 Presidential Decline of George Romney," 238.

⁵¹Harding, *The Book of Jerry Falwell*, 25–26, quoting a 1986 sermon: "In my adolescence and young adult years I don't remember hearing one person speak of the injustices of segregation. To the contrary, all my role models, including powerful church leaders, supported segregation. I have never once considered myself a racist. Yet, looking back, I have to admit that I was one. Unfortunately, I was not quick enough or Christian enough or insightful enough to realize my condition until those days of tumult in the 1960s."

⁵²"Mormon Church Flourishes," and "Meredith Requests Changes," *Christian Century*, January 23, 1963, 102–3. *Christian Century* went so far as to suggest that the University of Mississippi should lose its accreditation if it did not remedy the plight of enrolled black student James Meredith. See

survey found that 67 percent of Southern Baptists, 34 percent of Missouri Synod Lutherans, and 28 percent of Presbyterians agreed, in 1966, that “it would probably be better for Negroes and whites to attend separate churches.” Yet in a concurrent survey among Latter-day Saints in Utah and San Francisco, only 12 percent of Mormons agreed with the statement.⁵³

More than that, George Romney’s personal record on civil rights activism played louder than the controversial church position. What would George Romney’s record on civil rights have said? To those who saw a racist ideology in the LDS position, George Romney would have been an important counter-example. This might even have reassured some observers who saw Romney as subscribing to John F. Kennedy’s pledge of not making political decisions based on the directives of his faith’s hierarchy. At the very least, Romney’s vocal activism showed the complexity of the Mormon position and put a face on social surveys that suggested that Mormons were no more racist than their neighbors; in short, many Mormons understood the priesthood prohibition as something categorically separable from civic life.⁵⁴ Hugh B. Brown of the First Presidency had even spoken in favor of civil rights legislation at the 1963 general conference and reit-

also “Is Mormonism Reformable on Race?,” and “Mississippians Pay Dear Price for Bigotry,” *Christian Century*, May 5, 1966, 576–77. The colleges listed that refused to comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and thus lost federal funding for student loans, included Bob Jones University in South Carolina, Freewill Baptist Bible College in Tennessee, and Mississippi College, “the oldest and largest Mississippi Baptist institution” (577).

⁵³Armand Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 52.

⁵⁴These articles highlighted the diversity of opinion among Latter-day Saints—General Authorities and general membership alike—about the degree of support for civil rights legislation, and about the potential timing of a revelation that could change the priesthood policy: “Is Mormonism Reformable on Race?,” *Christian Century*, May 4, 1966, 576; “Mrs. Romney’s Quandary,” *Christian Century*, February 8, 1967, 165; James M. Perry, “Discrimination in the Priesthood?: Mr. Romney’s Latter-day Problem,” *The National Observer*, 10 April 1967, 11. For surveys demonstrating that Mormons “could not be considered outside the national consensus in their external attitudes toward African Americans,” see Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive*, 53. This conclusion is certainly not meant to suggest that

erated that support in 1969.⁵⁵

Almost without exception, reporters who connected the Church's position toward blacks with Romney's politics admitted that his record of aggressively lobbying for civil rights legislation was undeniably commendable. In fact, Romney's oft-repeated recourse when challenged about his Church's stance was, in essence, 'Look at my record.' He also effectively parried such challenges by pointing out that it was his faith's teachings about charity and the universal brotherhood that motivated his pursuit of racial equality before the law. In the spring of 1967, Romney visited Salt Lake City, conferred with President McKay, and met an interfaith ministers' group "at his

Latter-day Saints harbored no racial prejudices. However, considering the proliferation of media reports that listed "inferiority of the Negro" as a tenet of Mormonism, it is very likely that many contemporaries would have been surprised to learn that Latter-day Saints were no more racist in their views than the average American.

⁵⁵There was some question whether this was an official statement of the First Presidency or only part of President Hugh B. Brown's prepared remarks, but in 1965 the Church-owned *Deseret News* "reprinted it as a 'statement given officially' at the 1963 conference." Prince and Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism*, 69–70, prints the 1963 statement. Albert B. Fritz, leader of the Salt Lake NAACP, quoted in "Negro Group Lauds LDS Rights View," *Salt Lake Tribune*, October 7, 1963, 6, responded favorably by "asking all NAACP branches throughout the nation not to demonstrate or picket any LDS missions or churches." Brown and Fritz statements are also included in "Compiled Information Concerning African Americans, BYU, and the Church," Perry Special Collections. As with many issues during McKay's administration, Prince and Wright's discussion of racial controversies related to the priesthood policy deserves high marks for being comprehensive and insightful. See esp. their Chapter 4, "Blacks, Civil Rights, and the Priesthood," 60–105. See also Edward L. Kimball, "The Question of Priesthood Denial," Chapter 20 of his *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book/Provo, Utah: *BYU Studies*, 2005), esp. the "working draft," the accompanying CD-ROM that includes material omitted in the published version. For a recent and comprehensive overview of the complex relationship between blacks and the Church, see the 2009 documentary, *Nobody Knows: The Untold Story of Black Mormons*, written and directed by Darius Aidan Gray and Margaret Blair Young. The documentary's script was published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 42, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 100–128.

forthright best.” He answered “the inevitable questions” about the status of blacks by saying: “I was raised in the conviction that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are divinely inspired documents of the Creator, and all mankind is the child of God with basic rights.” “I have fought to eliminate racial discrimination. I want to be judged on the basis of my actions rather than someone’s idea of what the precepts of my faith are.” The reporter enthused: “It was a confrontation reminiscent of John Kennedy’s with the Greater Houston Ministerial Association in 1960, where Kennedy convinced many skeptical Protestants that a Roman Catholic could be a fair President.”⁵⁶ When Romney appeared on *Meet the Press* in 1964, the panelists did not mention the priesthood policy, but one asked: “What is your attitude, as a Mormon and as a public official, toward Negroes?” Romney replied, “My attitude is that a Negro is a child of God just like I am. . . . I believe our most urgent domestic problem is to wipe out human injustice and discrimination against the Negroes.”⁵⁷

George Romney’s consistency on this civil rights front came across, too, as a mark of personal integrity. In a telling piece, a *New York Times* reporter quoted a Republican Party official in Virginia who made it clear that Romney would have played it safer *not* to have taken such a strong stand for civil rights. The reporter then concluded, “If his Virginia debut provides any evidence, Mr. Romney will face the civil rights issue directly in his Southern campaigning rather than *soften his stand* to make friends among Republicans with strong feelings against equal opportunity legislation in housing and employment. In his first Southern political speech last night, the Governor deliberately chose to include a clear, forceful endorsement of civil rights that could have been *easily avoided*.”⁵⁸ It speaks volumes that, in the course of the pre-campaign interviews, Romney staffers in Kansas and North Carolina found that some Republicans enthusiastically believed that a Romney nomination would actually *improve* the GOP’s chances among black voters. After all, Romney’s popularity with Michigan’s black voters increased measurably in each of his three

⁵⁶“Two Romneys,” *Time*, March 3, 1967, 25.

⁵⁷Transcript, *Meet the Press*, February 9, 1964, Perry Special Collections.

⁵⁸Warren Weaver Jr., “Virginia Republicans Term Visit by Romney a Major Success” *New York Times*, April 17, 1967, 18, emphasis mine. This article did not mention Mormonism.

campaigns for governor.⁵⁹ In retrospect, his steady record of advocacy simply commanded more attention than complaints about institutional Mormonism.⁶⁰

Those complaints took on new intensity after Romney's campaign, with protests and riots swirling around BYU athletics and reaching a boiling point in the 1969–70 seasons. But even then, the question of image impact was complicated. In an era when many Americans struggled with the culture of protests and riots, Mormons seemed like an exceptionally all-American bunch. George Romney was the face of these characteristics, and perhaps even more influential than descriptions of Mormons in print at the time were depictions of Mormons in pictures.⁶¹ Jan Shipps has argued that, as television became increasingly important in the 1960s, so too did the im-

⁵⁹Perry, "Discrimination in the Priesthood?" 11: "Mr. Romney went on that year to win the governorship of Michigan. He was reelected in 1964 and again in 1966. Each time, he won more and more Negro votes, as the church issue became less and less controversial." See also Clayton Fritchey, "Romney's Record on Race," *Deseret News*, March 7, 1967: "Republicans used to get only 8 per cent of the Negro vote in that state [Michigan], but Romney got 11 per cent in 1962, 19 per cent in 1964 (compared with 4 for Goldwater) and over 35 per cent in 1966."

⁶⁰Pelo, "Mormonism in National Periodicals, 1961–1970," 39, found that only 36 percent of Romney-related articles in 1967 also discussed the LDS Church. When Romney returned to *Meet the Press* in October 1967, the Mormon priesthood connection was never mentioned (as in 1964), yet one panelist tacitly acknowledged Romney's strength as a spokesman for advocacy when he asked, "How do you get [people] to give the Negro respect" when "white attitudes" were "hardening . . . as a result of the [Detroit] riots"? Transcript, *Meet the Press*, October 15, 1967, Perry Special Collections.

⁶¹The Tabernacle Choir was not the only Mormon musical group to appear regularly on national television during the 1960s and reinforce the Church's family-friendly image. The clean-cut "Osmond Brothers" first appeared on the *Andy Williams Show* in 1962 and continued as regular guests throughout the decade. The popularity of the group, which achieved dramatic recording success in the 1970s, was reflected in its headline status in newspaper advertisements for Williams's upcoming programs. See, for example, ads in *New York Times*, October 1, 1963, 60; *New York Times*, January 24, 1964, 57 (an ad for a Bob Hope special); *New York Times*, August 4, 1968, D4; *New York Times*, November 22, 1969, 75.

ages of Mormonism on television, especially since, as she noted, most electronic media portrayals of Mormons did not mention racial issues as often as national magazines. Her recollections and observations about “the contrast” between the “radical Left” and the Latter-day Saints “made the image of the Saints even more appealing than it had been in the fifties, making this a time when at least middle America’s perceptions of the Saints would be overwhelmingly positive.” From her position as an outside observer of Mormonism, she found it not “at all uncommon to hear” in that era “that Mormons are ‘more American than the Americans,’” since “radio and television broadcasts, . . . almost as a reminder that the entire nation had not gone the way of the much-maligned, pot-smoking, flag-burning counterculture, featured all sorts of images of Mormons as neat, modest, virtuous, family-loving, conservative, and patriotic people.”⁶²

And this image persisted well into the 1970s, thanks to television and radio.⁶³ In 1972, a newly restructured LDS Church Public Affairs Department launched the *Homefront* public service announcements. They became a hit with broadcasters and garnered significant airtime across the country—free airtime, too, because of Federal Communications Commission requirements for public service announcements. These memorable pieces cemented the Mormons’ reputation for family-centeredness, with recognizable figures like the superstar Osmonds as the archetypes of that reputation.

ROMNEY’S FORTUNES, MORMONISM’S REPUTATION

George Romney benefited from—and also promulgated—that same public sense of Mormon wholesomeness and moral rectitude. Historians who have focused on national periodicals of the 1960s seem correct in their claims that *print* appraisals of Mormons took a

⁶²Jan Shippo, *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 100.

⁶³*Ibid.*: “If you take the electronic media into account, the decade or so between, say, 1963–64 and 1975–76 forms a unique period in the history of perceptions of the Saints. During this time, the LDS Church had what Americans who embraced the civil rights movement regarded as a retrograde position on race, one noted and commented on in the print media, especially *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *Christian Century*, and elite newspapers on the East Coast and West Coast. But that encumbrance was *usually overlooked* in radio and television broadcasts” (emphasis mine).

negative turn in the second half of the decade—television portrayals less so.⁶⁴ This negativity followed several tacks, all of which in some way touched the Romney campaign. Some reporters turned Romney's apparent strength—his morality—into a liability. It was not uncommon for articles to play a variation of the “too good to be true” theme.⁶⁵ Historian Dennis Lythgoe's intriguing—and compelling—retrospective evaluation of the campaign is that George Romney suffered in the polls because he was portrayed as *too* religious. One opponent joked that it was like “running against God” to face him.⁶⁶ More damaging were implications that he took a messianic approach to his political destiny, that he saw things in moral black and white, and that he was unyielding and uncooperative when he made a decision.⁶⁷ Reporters and opponents took exception to the fact that he fasted and prayed before making the decision to enter the governor's race—allegedly implying a “pipeline to God.”⁶⁸ This intrusion of personal piety into politics seemed so unusual at the time that some saw it as manipulative. Even Lythgoe conceded that the issue was more about “religious dedication” and “not necessarily Mormonism.” Significantly, this was as much a commentary on the political culture of the time as it was on a specific candidate.⁶⁹

Still, there seem to be some compelling reasons to doubt that

⁶⁴Lythgoe, “The Changing Image of Mormonism in Periodical Literature,” 267; Pelo, “Mormonism in National Periodicals,” 83.

⁶⁵Stewart Alsop, “George Romney: The G.O.P.'s Fast Comer,” *Saturday Evening Post*, May 26, 1962, 15, was suggesting even in 1962: “Courageous, right-thinking, true blue. . . . Romney is all those things. There are times when Romney seems almost too good to be true.”

⁶⁶Stewart Alsop, “It's like Running against God,” *Saturday Evening Post*, October 22, 1966, 20; the comment came from Zoltan Ferency, Romney's opponent in the 1966 Michigan gubernatorial race.

⁶⁷Lythgoe, “The Changing Image of Mormonism,” 241–47. This sentiment is clearly expressed in “Holy George,” *New Republic*, December 3, 1966, 4: “Piety is often associated, alas, with inflexibility.”

⁶⁸AFL-CIO leader Gus Scholle complained in “Michigan: The Mormon Issue,” *Time*, March 2, 1962, 21: “This business of trying to put on an act of having a pipeline to God in order to become Governor of Michigan is about the greatest anticlimax to a phony stunt I've ever seen.”

⁶⁹Lythgoe, “The 1968 Presidential Decline of George Romney,” 240,

these reports were as damaging as has been suggested to either Romney's or Mormonism's public image. The neutralizing effect of the equivalent number of nationally circulated articles that expressed admiration for Romney's adherence to his principles must be taken into consideration. Every print offering in these magazines would, of course, be filtered through the disparate viewpoints of their far-flung readership. The obvious reality that media representatives who influence public opinion do not always accurately reflect public opinion seemed the message in Stewart Alsop's admission that "[Gus] Scholle [president of Michigan's AFL-CIO] and the scoffers in the Michigan press corps are in the minority. Almost everybody else who knows Romney likes and admires him."⁷⁰

The steadiness of his popularity through 1967 should not be ignored for what it can say about public acceptance of a Mormon candidate—and his popularity did not seem affected by criticism over his religious zeal or his Church's policy toward ordaining black men.⁷¹ Importantly, even as articles highlighting the candidate and his religion

made this telling summary of the place of religion in the contemporary political climate: "The reaction of the public clearly suggested that any candidate relying heavily on piety, *be it Mormon or any other faith*, could have serious credibility problems. Perhaps Romney's major liability was not necessarily Mormonism, but *rather religious dedication*. Conceivably, a candidate of another faith could be faced with a similar problem; or a Mormon better able to compartmentalize his faith and his politics might erase that problem" (emphasis mine). Lythgoe seemed prescient in this paragraph, which concluded his article, in wondering whether a candidate who made overt references to personal religion could ever win over the public. He would only have to wait five years to find an appropriate test case: Jimmy Carter in 1976.

⁷⁰Alsop, "George Romney: The G.O.P.'s Fast Comer," 16. See also a February 1966 Gallup poll indicating that 43 percent of respondents were "able to identify Gov. Romney," and "seven persons in ten of those who identify Romney have a favorable impression of the man. Only seven percent of this group say they hold an unfavorable impression." George Gallup, "43% in U.S. Can Identify Gov. Romney," *Washington Post*, February 26, 1966, photocopy in "George Romney—Correspondence, 1965–1966," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 3.

⁷¹See "Romney's Week," *Newsweek*, May 1, 1967, 20–21: "Does Michigan's evangelistic Gov. George Romney have the staying power to capture

appeared with increasing frequency, Romney did not drop in preelection polls, as this sampling of Gallup polls below demonstrates.

Gallup Poll #740 (January 26–31, 1967), question 3c asked: “Suppose the choice for President in the Republican convention in 1968 narrows down to Richard Nixon and George Romney. Which ONE would you prefer to have the Republican convention select?” Of 3,491 respondents, 40.5 percent preferred Nixon; 44.37 percent preferred Romney, and 15.12 percent had no opinion. Question 5a-b asked: “Suppose the Presidential election were being held TODAY. If George Romney were the Republican candidate and Lyndon Johnson were the Democratic candidate, which would you like to see win?” Romney was ahead with 45.69 percent to Johnson’s 41.56 percent.

The mid-February poll #741 (February 16–21, 1967) asked its question 5a to 3,509 respondents: “Here is a list of men who have been mentioned as possible Presidential candidates for the Republican party in 1968. Which ONE would you like to see nominated as the Republican candidate for President in 1968?” The list included Mark Hatfield, John Lindsay, Richard Nixon, Charles Percy, Ronald Reagan, Nelson Rockefeller, and George Romney. Romney topped the list with an eight-percentage point lead over Nixon.

Only weeks before Romney’s “brainwashing in Vietnam” comment, Gallup Poll #749, for August 3–8, 1967, posed question 7a:

the 1968 Republican Presidential nomination? Right now, Romney is the clear leader in the polls, the professed choice of most influential party moderates and the most active non-candidate on the political landscape. Yet deep doubts about his White House mettle still nag the pros. . . . And the result of the week’s developments seemed to shrink Romney’s plausibility gap. . . . A new Gallup poll found *Republican county chairmen* around the nation convinced that the nomination would finally go to Nixon. . . . Gallup’s breakdown showed *Romney doing significantly better among rank-and-file voters*. The latest Louis Harris poll drew the line more clearly. Harris’s figures showed Romney leading Lyndon Johnson 53 to 47 percent while Nixon was trailing the President, 54 to 46 percent. Romney rated better than Nixon in every part of the country (including, surprisingly, the South), among Republicans, Democrats and independents, and by every significant *ethnic* and age index” (emphasis mine). These findings show Romney’s widespread appeal to a variety of voters, even though, as many observers noted, he was not a party favorite, a reflection at least in part of the conservative-moderate rift.

“Here is a list of men who have been mentioned as possible Presidential candidates for the Republican Party in 1968. Which ONE would you like to see nominated as the Republican candidate for President in 1968?” The list was the same and, with 9,506 respondents, Romney and Nixon were still at the front of the pack, although Romney had dropped to a close second place: Nixon led with 22.72 percent, followed by Romney, 20.58 percent; Rockefeller, 18.36 percent, and Reagan, 12.52 percent. “Don’t know, no answer” garnered 10.51 percent. Dropping under 10 percent were Hatfield, Lindsay, and Percy. When the same poll asked (question 7b), “And who would be your second choice?” Romney was back in first place with 19.2 percent, followed by Nixon (13.68 percent), Rockefeller (16.52 percent), and Reagan (11.48 percent). Still under 10 percent were Hatfield, Lindsay, and Percy, but “Don’t know, no answer” had surpassed all but Romney with 17.61 percent. A third question (9a-b) tested tendency: “Suppose the Presidential election were being held TODAY. If George Romney were the Republican candidate and Lyndon Johnson were the Democratic candidate, which would you like to see win?” Romney still came out on top, polling 43.89 percent to Johnson’s 35.77 percent.⁷²

These surveys throughout 1967 only seemed to bear out what Romney’s staffers had heard from Republicans across the country in late 1966: there was considerable optimism that the nomination would go to Romney.⁷³ A *New Republic* columnist in December 1966 noted that “some Washington writers have all but given him the nomination already.”⁷⁴ Kansas Governor Bill Avery read the electorate’s vital signs this way: “As far as I can see, the last Gallup poll showing Romney ahead of everybody, pretty well reflects the feelings of Republicans in Kansas.”⁷⁵

But Romney’s poll numbers did drop precipitously, almost overnight, after his comment about the Vietnam War gained traction in

⁷²These polls are available at the *Gallup Brain* database, accessible to subscribers at <http://brain.gallup.com/home.aspx> (accessed November 3, 2012).

⁷³This feeling was expressed in interviews in Kansas, Missouri, Maine, Massachusetts, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon, New York, Colorado, and Utah. See subsections for each state in Marriott Papers, Special Collections, Box 167, fds. 11–13.

⁷⁴“Holy George,” 4.

⁷⁵See, for example, the comments in “Kansas,” Marriott Papers, Box

the national media. In an August 31, 1967, interview with a Detroit television station, Romney explained that he had changed his position on Vietnam—that he had been, essentially, “brainwashed” by military leaders on an earlier trip to that country.⁷⁶ He now favored ending the conflict and leaving Vietnam. Not only was brainwashing an emotionally charged term in this era of Cold War espionage and POW torture, but it also implied a lack of mental toughness, or at least perceptiveness.⁷⁷ Pundits, even sympathetic ones, had long been concerned about Romney’s lack of experience in foreign affairs. This concern surfaced almost as regularly in the exploratory interviews as his rift with Barry Goldwater. A survey of national newspapers shows that, throughout the spring and summer of 1967, reporters focused first on Romney’s reluctance to state his position on Vietnam and then on his decision to support the White House’s escalation of the conflict. Even as media outlets tried to pin him down on the Vietnam issue, Romney’s position in the polls held steady. It was only after the notorious brainwashing comment that misgivings about Romney’s deficiencies in foreign policy translated into a measurable fall from presidential contention.⁷⁸

Not only did newspaper after newspaper reinforce the impression that Vietnam had done Romney in, but his friends and advisers

167, fd. 12, 1.

⁷⁶For the immediate context of the “brainwashed” comment, together with extensive excerpts from the television interview, see Mollenhoff, *George Romney*, 290–94.

⁷⁷This was certainly the angle taken by numerous commentators. See, for example, *Congressional Quarterly*, September 15, 1967, 1823–24: Former Governor Henry Bellmon (Oklahoma) “said Romney’s statement had shown a ‘weakness’”; Barry Goldwater said, “Romney’s statement was an insult to the other Governors traveling with him”; Governor Philip H. Hoff (D-Vt.) “said Romney was either a ‘most naïve man or he lacks judgment.’”

⁷⁸See, for example, “How Republican Race Shapes Up Now,” *U.S. News and World Report*, September 25, 1967, 55–56: “Suddenly, fortunes are shifting in the Republican Party, after Governor Romney’s charge of being ‘brainwashed’ in Vietnam. . . . Another national leader observed: ‘Romney is through. He won’t be a factor at the Convention.’ . . . After George Romney’s ‘brainwashing’ remark, doubts rose about his chances.” See Don Muchmore, “Nixon Replaces Romney as Pick of GOP Voters,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 17, 1967: “In a dramatic switch from March this year, . . .

privately conceded the same. In a strongly worded letter in October 1967, his frustrated friend J. Willard Marriott asked Romney to stop trying to explain his Vietnam statement, since the “news men” only wanted to “rehash Viet Nam and brainwash” and that the rehashing had negatively affected Romney’s “image and popularity” in just a matter of “a few weeks.”⁷⁹

Of course, single-cause explanations by definition ignore the complex interplay of historical factors that contribute to an event or trend, and thus should always be a little suspect.⁸⁰ Still, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that George Romney’s Vietnam statement (and overall approach to the Vietnam issue) inflicted by far the most dam-

Republican voters now give Nixon a substantial lead. . . . This is the first survey taken in California to reveal the impact of Romney’s recent ‘Vietnam brainwash’ statement, made shortly before field polling began.” See also “The Bell Tolls for a Galloping Ghost,” *Newsweek*, September 25, 1967, 27: “The funeral arrangements were made, the dirges were sung. In the wake of the great ‘brainwashing’ fiasco, George Romney resembled nothing so much as a case of inadvertent political suicide. His friends despaired, his enemies rejoiced, and the pollsters grimly catalogued his fall. Could it be that the leading Republican Presidential candidate had killed himself off even before he had made his campaign official? That was the message everyone seemed to be getting last week—everyone, that is, except the corpse.” Romney, *Newsweek* noted, still felt that “brainwashed” sent the right message, but others apparently did not agree: “I’m glad I used that word. It woke up the country. Nobody was paying attention, when I only used words like ‘snow job.’” *Newsweek* concluded: “After leading all the other Republican contenders . . . for almost a year, Romney plummeted overnight to fourth place” (28).

⁷⁹J. Willard Marriott, Letter to Governor George Romney, October 3, 1967, Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 4, 1–2.

⁸⁰Several observers suggested that the Detroit riots in the summer of 1967 also damaged the public’s perception of Romney’s leadership. Much more, “Nixon Replaces Romney as Pick of GOP Voters”; Kranish and Helman, *The Real Romney*, 72–73. Yet, importantly, biographer Clark Mollenhoff, *George Romney: Mormon in Politics*, 290, noted that “in late August 1967, surveys indicated that the Michigan Governor had managed a miraculous political recovery in the wake of the Detroit riots and his tough talk about treating the instigators of the riots as traitors. The Gallup Poll published on August 20, 1967, showed that Romney had again overtaken President Johnson and was leading by a margin of 49 to 41 percent, with 10 per-

aging blow to his presidential campaign. He had successfully weathered jabs over his religion and his views on race, but he could not recover from the spectacular knockout punch that came, seemingly, out of nowhere, just as the fight was getting interesting.

In the end, George Romney's presidential aspirations were never put to a ballot test. While he officially announced his candidacy in November 1967 (less than three months after the "brainwashing" misstep), he withdrew from the race on the eve of the New Hampshire primary, in February 1968. Even with his rapid descent in the polls, his withdrawal came as a surprise to many who knew the tenacity and energy with which Romney had approached every previous endeavor, from the oft-repeated story of his seven-year courtship of his future bride, to his aggressive advocacy of compact cars. In that same spirit, the *New York Times* noted that "Mr. Romney's decision to withdraw confounded those who had thought his Mormon religious background would not permit him to 'quit' so soon. A dogged determination had been his trademark since he entered Michigan politics in 1962."⁸¹ It seems that the writing on the wall for Romney was his inability in early 1968 to persuade the Republican governors to give him their public endorsements, although earlier, many had privately expressed support. New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, who had initially committed to back Romney, wavered in that support, and then declared his own intention to run, which siphoned many moderate Republicans away from Romney. Oklahoma Governor Dewey Bartlett proved to be pointedly prophetic. His message to the Romney camp had been that he planned to openly back Romney "when the time is right," provided that Mr. Romney did not "foul up somewhere along the road."⁸²

Perhaps if George Romney's campaign had extended well into the primary season, or even if he had secured the Republican nomination, the increased scrutiny that would have come with such a position might have invited more serious debates about the acceptability

cent of those polled undecided."

⁸¹Tom Wicker, "Impact of Romney Move: His Withdrawal Could Prove to Be One of Decisive Actions of Election," *New York Times*, February 29, 1968, 22.

⁸²Oklahoma Governor Dewey Bartlett, quoted by Missouri State Senator Clifford Jones, who was Bartlett's college roommate at Princeton. See "Missouri," Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 12, 4.

of a Mormon president.⁸³ As history stands, however, and considering the intensity of the media spotlight on George Romney and his Church, it is difficult to speculate whether more attention would have been detrimental or not. That is because, in hindsight, and as far as can be determined from available evidence, George Romney's active LDS membership did not seem to torpedo his presidential chances. If anything, as portrayed in the media and as judged by political advisers, his principled life was his most attractive feature. Even in the midst of the Vietnam troubles, one adviser suggested that Romney should speak more of his religious views, appealing to Americans' faith in the guiding hand of providence at that troubled time.⁸⁴ Such a suggestion only underscores the lack of worry over Romney's Mormonism in the 1960s.⁸⁵

But a new chapter on the reputation of institutional Mormonism was about to open. In a 1973 opinion survey commissioned by the LDS Church's Public Communications Department, respondents ranked the LDS Church relatively low in comparison to other denominations when it came to perceptions of secrecy and suspicion, and even lower in terms of public influence.⁸⁶ Only a few years later, the Church's active opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment in the late 1970s alarmed some commentators who worried about the

⁸³Lythgoe, "The 1968 Presidential Decline of George Romney," 238, speculated that "the Negro issue . . . undoubtedly would have been more serious had Romney won the nomination"

⁸⁴C. Robert Yeager, Letter to David B. Goldberg, January 8, 1968, in Marriott Papers, Box 167, fd. 4, 2, called Romney "too frank for his own good and too honest answering obviously controversial questions." He urged capitalizing on these "weaknesses" "and project[ing] him into an image of exactly what he is, a dedicated, honest, and deeply religious man who is not a politician. . . . If you don't think it is too corny, I would suggest that he ask people, because people know that he is dedicated and religious, to pray for him in the things he is trying to do as a candidate. If he is not the man, in their opinion who can do the job, they should figure out who would be the best man and elect him."

⁸⁵The fact that *Meet the Press* in the October 1967 did not mention Romney's Mormonism (although it did bring up his civil rights advocacy) seems another confirmation that his religion did not provoke widespread concern. *Meet the Press* 2, no. 42 (October 15, 1967), Perry Special Collections.

⁸⁶See "Attitudes and Opinions towards Religion: Religious attitudes

underappreciated political clout that the highly centralized and wealthy Church could wield when it wanted to. That clout threatened not only those on the political left who saw Mormonism's sense of morality as anachronistic and repressive, but also those of the new Christian Right who wanted to make very clear the religious divide that separated Mormons and traditional Christians. *The God Makers* film, which premiered in late 1982, gained rapid popularity, painting the LDS Church in ominous, even satanic, hues. When the Mark Hofmann bombing and forgery scandal made front-page news nationwide in 1985, the repeated accusations from so many sides about Mormonism's secrecy, its authoritarianism, and its bizarre history and practices could not be easily sloughed off by the Church's media representatives.

Not only did these charges make a measurable dent on Mormonism's public standing—three times as many Americans viewed Mormons favorably in 1977 as they did in 1991⁸⁷—they also showed remarkable staying power in setting the agenda on Mormonism more than two decades later. For example, in December 2006, *Slate* magazine's editor, Jacob Weisberg, predicted nearly all of the contours of the still-future debates over Mitt Romney's faith. Although "various evangelical sects continue to view Mormonism as heretical, non-

of adults (over 18) who are residents of six major metropolitan areas in the United States: Seattle, Los Angeles, Kansas City, Dallas, Chicago, New York City—August 1973," 17, Perry Special Collections.

⁸⁷Barna Research Group, "Americans' Impressions of Various Church Denominations," September 18, 1991, 1-2, copy in my possession. In response to "How favorably do you consider the Mormon denomination?," 6 percent responded "very favorably. The Gallup Poll #978, June 14, 1977, question 19k, *Gallup Brain* database, accessible to subscribers at <http://brain.gallup.com/documents/questionnaire.aspx?STUDY=AIPO0978&p=4> (accessed November 3, 2012) had a scale ranging from +5 (for very favorable) to -5 (for very unfavorable). The +5 (9.88 percent) and +4 (7.92 percent) total 18 percent of responses. While the polls' different metrics do not allow precise matches, the decline is apparent. Also in 1977, 36 percent of respondents gave Mormons a "+1, +2, or +3" rating; in the 1991 Barna survey, only 21 percent felt "somewhat favorable" about Latter-day Saints. Therefore, in 1977, 54 percent of those surveyed ranked Mormons positively; and in 1991, the comparable percentage was 27 percent. Baptist churches received 29 percent as being viewed "very favorably."

Christian, or even satanic,” evangelical “leaders” would give Romney a second look because of their “shared faith in social conservatism”—which they did. He also surmised that those same conservatives would question Romney’s apparently “moderate views on abortion and gay rights” during his Massachusetts campaigns and his subsequent turn in a more conservative direction. Weisberg suggested that Romney would be charged with “flip-flopping” on these issues—which he was. Still, Weisberg’s most negative point was that “moderate and secular voters” should “rightly” make “Romney’s religion . . . an issue,” because “someone who truly believed in the founding whoppers of Mormonism” demonstrated “a basic failure to think for himself or see the world as it is.” Weisberg anticipated the counter-argument that “you [are] a religious bigot if you wouldn’t cast a ballot for a believing Mormon.” His response was that “Joseph Smith was an obvious con man. Romney has every right to believe in con men, but I want to know if he does, and if so, I don’t want him running the country.”⁸⁸ Considering the history between 1968 and 2008, it is little wonder that the “Mormon” label loaded more baggage on Mitt Romney’s campaign bus than it did on his father’s.

These dynamics of timing, historical parallels, and contrasts make George Romney’s campaign an intriguing base point from which to measure the subsequent developments in American politics *and* religion *and* Mormonism that made the treatment of Mormonism during Mitt Romney’s two campaigns so markedly different from that of his father’s—all of which was captured in a question that swirled repeatedly around the younger Romney: “Is America ready for a Mormon president?”

In 2008 and 2012, that question provoked uneasiness on the right and on the left. But in 1968, the answer to that question seemed to be an almost dispassionate “Why not?”

⁸⁸Jacob Weisberg, “Romney’s Religion: A Mormon President? No Way,” *Slate*, December 20, 2006, <http://www.slate.com/id/2155902> (accessed August 8, 2012). A month earlier, John Dickerson in *Slate* felt that Mormonism’s seemingly bizarre elements required an explanation: “If they’re talking about your bloomers, it’s time to clear things up.” John Dickerson, “Time to Talk Mormon, Mitt,” *Slate*, November 28, 2006; quoted as part of Craig L. Foster’s important survey, in *A Different God?: Mitt Romney, the Religious Right, and the Mormon Question* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2008), 126.

“PREPARED TO ABIDE THE PENALTY”: LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

J. David Pulsipher

DURING THE SECOND HALF of the nineteenth century, Latter-day Saints engaged in what one historian has characterized as “the longest continuously sustained record of planned civil disobedience in the history of this nation.”¹ For twenty-eight years—from 1862, when plural marriage was first declared illegal in Utah Territory, until 1890, when Church leaders withdrew official support for new plural marriages—the Latter-day Saint people consciously and

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¹T. Edgar Lyon, review of *The “Americanization” of Utah for Statehood*, by Gustive O. Larson, *BYU Studies* 12, no. 1 (1971): 138. Carmon Hardy used almost identical language when he referred to the Latter-day resistance effort as “one of the longest campaigns of civil disobedience in American history.” *Doing the Works of Abraham: Mormon Polygamy: Its Origin, Practice, and Demise*, Vol. 9 of *THE KINGDOM IN THE WEST: THE MORMONS AND THE AMERICAN FRONTIER*, edited by Will Bagley (Norman, Okla.: Arthur H. Clark, 2007), 392.

publicly defied what they considered to be an unjust and unconstitutional series of laws to restrict their religious liberty. The term “civil disobedience” creates discomfort for many of their twenty-first century heirs, and it has never enjoyed much currency in LDS culture, where obedience to spiritual and temporal laws is a central principle.² Nevertheless, while Latter-day Saints have kept the concept at arm’s length, the characteristics of their nineteenth-century defiance—their conscientiousness, publicity, nonviolence, respect for the rule of law, and consequent willingness to endure legal punishment—conform to classic definitions of civil disobedience as it is defined in political theory.³

If modern Latter-day Saints have been reluctant to embrace the concept, their predecessors’ experiment with civil disobedience has also been largely ignored by scholars of nonviolent resistance. Within this classic narrative—a tradition that embraces colonial tax resisters, Henry David Thoreau, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King—the Latter-day Saint contribution, despite its scale and duration, barely registers.⁴ Several factors help explain this scholarly omission. First, the cause for which the Latter-day Saints defied the law—the right to prac-

²One of the rare examples of a broad Latter-day Saint narrative that consciously refers to principles of civil disobedience is James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 401. Allen is one of the few LDS historians to consistently apply the term “civil disobedience” to Latter-day Saint resistance to federal law. See, for example, James B. Allen, “‘Good Guys’ vs. ‘Good Guys’: Rudger Clawson, John Sharp, and Civil Disobedience in Nineteenth-Century Utah,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 148–74.

³Civil disobedience theory is perhaps most thoroughly defined in John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), 319–43. Rawls was particularly concerned with defining and justifying civil disobedience in what he called “the special case of a nearly just society, one that is well-ordered for the most part but in which some serious violations of justice nevertheless do occur” (319), a relatively apt description of nineteenth-century America.

⁴Most historical surveys of civil disobedience do not mention the Latter-day Saints at all. However, Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *Civil Disobedience: An Encyclopedic History of Dissidence in the United States* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2009), 18–22, includes an entry on resistance to the antipolygamy laws. The entry is confusing and riddled with factual errors, but it may indi-

tice plural marriage—was uniformly unpopular in the nineteenth century and continues to remain anathema today, despite general sympathy for religious freedom and despite dramatic changes in sexual standards over the last century. Other causes that employed civil disobedience, such as the struggles for American independence and the abolition of slavery, began as unpopular minority views but later achieved overwhelming validation. Polygamy has never achieved the same cachet.

Moreover, the Latter-day Saint struggle was not ultimately successful. Success often breeds scholarly recognition and approbation—as Gandhi’s struggle for Indian independence and King’s campaign for civil rights both demonstrated—although even a failed campaign may achieve “noble” status if it is perceived as attempting to advance peace, equality, or justice. Since plural marriage is not generally regarded as furthering these principles, a failed civil disobedience campaign to preserve it is easily overlooked in the larger nonviolence narrative.⁵

But there are good reasons for analyzing the Latter-day Saint resistance effort within a broader context of civil disobedience theory and practice. For one, although their campaign failed, it was the first large-scale American civil disobedience movement that did not descend into violence, as did both the struggle for independence and the campaign against slavery.⁶ Moreover, the manner in which Church leaders publicly established, rationalized, and defended their strategy anticipated many civil disobedience arguments that later would be more fully developed by Gandhi and King. Consequently, because LDS civil disobedience took place before a systematic theory

cate a new trend toward including the LDS experience in civil disobedience history.

⁵For an analysis of potential sources and common expressions of contemporary bias against polygamy, see Arland Thornton, “The International Fight against Barbarism: Historical and Comparative Perspectives on Marriage Timing, Consent, and Polygamy,” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, Springfield, Illinois, May 20, 2009; photocopy in my possession, courtesy of Thornton.

⁶There were a few isolated incidents of violence during the national antipolygamy campaign and LDS resistance to it, but nothing comparable to the widespread warfare that both colonial independence and antislavery advocates ultimately supported to achieve their goals.

was fully realized and because its arguments evolved in relative isolation from other movements, the Mormon experiment is an instructive example of how civil disobedience strategies can emerge from unexpected quarters, sharing remarkable similarities in logic and strategy with the mainstream tradition, but also with important differences that beg for comparison.

DEFINITIONS

While many of the basic principles of “civil disobedience” have been understood and applied for millennia, the phrase is controversial in part because it is so pliable, being invoked to justify (or criticize) everything from peaceful protest to violent assassinations. As one scholar noted, “The student of civil disobedience rapidly finds himself surrounded by a maze of semantical problems and grammatical niceties. Like Alice in Wonderland, he often finds that specific terminology has no more (or no less) meaning than the individual orator intends it to have.”⁷ The phrase first emerged in the United States during the 1840s and ’50s—most famously with Henry David Thoreau—and by the Civil War had achieved relatively widespread usage.⁸ But more fully articulated theories and systematic methods did not emerge until the twentieth century, first through the experiments and writings of practitioners such as Gandhi and King, and later through formal political theorists such as John Rawls. These, and other likeminded activists and thinkers, constitute what might be considered a “mainstream” of civil disobedience theory. And while the phrase continues to be contested, certain broad parameters have been articulated and accepted within that mainstream tradition.⁹

What makes the Latter-day Saint campaign so intriguing is that, although Mormons never used the phrase “civil disobedience” to de-

⁷J. L. LeGrande, “Nonviolent Civil Disobedience and Police Enforcement Policy,” *The Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology, and Police Science* 58, no. 3 (1967): 393.

⁸Henry David Thoreau’s famous essay by that title was first published as “Resistance to Civil Government” in 1849 and was posthumously retitled “Civil Disobedience” in 1866.

⁹Even the mainstream concept is not entirely without disagreement, as scholars and activists debate how narrow or broad the parameters should be. For an excellent summary of the basic definitions and debates, see Kimberley Brownlee, “Civil Disobedience,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Phi-*

scribe their resistance to federal law—and did not perceive their actions as related to those of abolitionists and other contemporaries who did employ the phrase; and although they could not have foreseen the more systematic arguments of subsequent practitioners, the logic by which they approached their campaign corresponds remarkably well to the broadly accepted outlines of the mainstream tradition as it emerged in the next century. To appreciate these striking similarities—and important differences—we must first define this theory as it later developed.

At its core, civil disobedience theory hinges on a difference between just and unjust laws. Such distinctions have long been debated. Augustine of Hippo asserted in the fifth century: “In the temporal law nothing is just and lawful that men do not derive from eternal law.”¹⁰ Over fifteen hundred years later, Martin Luther King described the difference in similarly religious terms: “A just law is a man-made code that squares with the moral law or the law of God. An unjust law is a code that is out of harmony with the moral law.”¹¹ John Rawls, the political philosopher who most thoroughly articulated a comprehensive theory of civil disobedience, employed a more secular standard, distinguishing between those laws that uphold principles of fairness or equal liberty and those that seriously infringe upon or blatantly violate such principles.¹² King also employed secular logic when he declared that “an unjust law is a code that the majority inflicts on the minority that is not binding on itself [or] is a code which the majority inflicts upon the minority, which that minority had no part in enacting or creating.”¹³

Questions of how to define just laws—whether by an appeal to

losophy (Spring 2010 ed.), edited by Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2010/entries/civil-disobedience/> (accessed February 1, 2013).

¹⁰Augustine of Hippo, *De Libero Arbitrio*, as quoted in Eva-Maria Kuhn, “Justice Applied by the Episcopal Arbitrator: Augustine and the Implementation of Divine Justice,” *Ethics and Politics* 9, no. 2 (2007): 76.

¹¹Martin Luther King Jr., *A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King Jr.*, edited by James M. Washington (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1986), 293.

¹²Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 326.

¹³King, *A Testament of Hope*, 49.

natural law or secular philosophies of fairness—and who gets to define them, elicit widely divergent views even among civil disobedience theorists.¹⁴ But on two key points most are agreed: (1) There is some fundamental distinction between a just and an unjust law, and 2) While just laws command respect and obedience, an unjust law can—some even insist *must*—be resisted through disobedience.¹⁵ British politician and theorist Algernon Sidney offered perhaps the most succinct expression of this sentiment over three hundred years ago: “That which is not just, is not Law; and that which is not Law, ought not to be obeyed.”¹⁶

Even so, current standards for engaging in civil disobedience are significantly more demanding than simply defying an unjust law. Private or covert defiance generally does not meet the criteria, because such behavior may be simply criminal or self-interested. Even when it is not, secret defiance ignores one of the most important elements of civil disobedience—its communicative nature. That is, it seeks to address and engage those in power or society at large to create a climate in which an unjust law might be reconsidered.¹⁷ Accordingly, civil disobedience, strictly defined, is always open and public. And because it seeks to establish a more just society and wishes to preserve conditions for future cooperation with those who currently uphold the unjust laws, civil disobedience is necessarily nonviolent.¹⁸ Consequently, one concise definition of civil disobedience is: “a public, non-violent and conscientious breach of law undertaken with the

¹⁴Brian Barry, *Theories of Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

¹⁵Andrew Sabl, “Looking Forward to Justice: Rawlsian Civil Disobedience and Its Non-Rawlsian Lessons,” *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 9, no. 3 (2001): 307–30.

¹⁶Algernon Sydney, *Discourses Concerning Government*, 3rd ed. (London: A. Millar, 1751), 300. Complementary sentiments were later expressed by the celebrated British jurist Sir William Blackstone when he declared that the “law of nature” was “superior in obligation to any other” and that “no human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this.” *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1765), 41.

¹⁷Brian Smart, “Defining Civil Disobedience,” in *Civil Disobedience in Focus*, edited by Hugo Adam Bedau (London: Routledge, 1991), 189–211.

¹⁸Sabl, “Looking Forward to Justice.”

aim of bringing about a change in laws or government policies.”¹⁹

There are generally two ways in which civil disobedience might bring about such change. The first is by highlighting the injustice of the law with such drama as to appeal to deep cultural values regarding fairness, equal liberty, or other fundamental human rights. According to this dynamic, an aggrieved minority breaches an unjust law and willingly suffers its accompanying punishment, thus demonstrating how the law infringes on basic rights. John Rawls notes that such suffering forces the majority who directly or indirectly sustain the law to reevaluate its support—“to consider whether it wishes to have its actions construed in this way, or whether, in the view of the common sense of justice, it wishes to acknowledge the legitimate claims of the minority.”²⁰ As Martin Luther King observed: “If you confront a man who has been cruelly misusing you, and say, ‘Punish me, if you will; I do not deserve it, but I will accept it, so that the world will know I am right and you are wrong,’ you wield a powerful and just weapon. This man . . . if he has any conscience, . . . is ashamed. Wherever this weapon is used in a manner that stirs a community’s, or a nation’s, anguished conscience, then the pressure of public opinion becomes an ally in your just cause.”²¹ Gandhi phrased it even more succinctly: “We mean to convert by our suffering.”²²

But while conversion is the ideal method for changing unjust laws, it is not necessarily essential. Civil disobedience can also bring about change by disrupting the normal levers of power, making it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for a government to enforce an unjust law. All governments, from democracies to dictatorships, operate on an assumption of consent—given gladly or fearfully—by the general population. But if a significant number of people withdraw their consent and deliberately defy a law long enough, they can render enforcement of that law impractical or, at least, costly.²³ Both Gandhi and King understood this dynamic when they encouraged their followers to disobey en masse unjust laws—such as the British salt monopoly

¹⁹Summarized in Brownlee, “Civil Disobedience.”

²⁰Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 321.

²¹King, *A Testament of Hope*, 348–49.

²²M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance (Satyagraha)* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2001), 169.

²³Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action. Part 1: Power and Strug-*

and American racial segregation—thus clogging their respective judicial and penal systems and forcing those in power to reevaluate their policies.

Whether their behavior induces conversion or simply frustrates enforcement, when people openly and willingly suffer the legal penalties of an unjust law, they also, ironically, uphold the rule of law, since they are usually *seeking* punishment—to highlight injustice—rather than avoiding it. Modern civil disobedience theorists are divided about whether such strict fidelity to a legal system is a required element of this method, but it was central to the philosophies of both Gandhi and King.²⁴ Martin Luther King described “a moral obligation to obey just and right laws.”²⁵ Gandhi even more explicitly connected obedience to just laws as a necessary prerequisite to civil disobedience, declaring that a person who engaged in this type of resistance obeyed most laws of society “intelligently and of his own free will, because he considers it to be his sacred duty to do so. It is only when a person has thus obeyed the laws of society scrupulously that he is in a position to judge as to which particular rules are good and just and which are unjust and iniquitous. Only then does the right accrue to him of the civil disobedience of certain laws in well-defined situations.”²⁶

These, then, are the key characteristics of civil disobedience as advocated by Gandhi, King, and most mainstream theorists: (1) a fundamental distinction between just and unjust laws, (2) a conscientious, public, and nonviolent breach of an unjust law, seeking to change that law either through moral suasion or by frustrating its enforcement, and (3) fidelity to the rule of law generally, demonstrated by a willingness to obey just laws and to submit to the legal penalties for disobeying unjust laws. As we shall see, Latter-day Saint defiance to federal antipolygamy laws in the late nineteenth century generally fulfilled these requirements for civil disobedience, albeit with important—though not necessarily disqualifying—peculiarities.

gle (Boston: Extending Horizon Books, 1973). For a more concise treatment of the same concepts, see Gene Sharp, *Waging Nonviolent Struggle: 20th Century Practice and 21st Century Potential* (Boston: Extending Horizon Books, 2005), 13–48.

²⁴Brownlee, “Civil Disobedience.”

²⁵King, *A Testament of Hope*, 48.

²⁶Gandhi, *Non-Violent Resistance*, 75.

ROOTS

Strictly speaking, Latter-day Saint civil disobedience was not fully realized until the late 1870s and early '80s. But a foundation for this method of resistance was laid over several preceding decades. Similar to other civil disobedience practitioners, the Latter-day Saints first established a theory of just and unjust laws. An 1831 revelation to Joseph Smith declared: "Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land. Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet" (LDS D&C 58:21–22). This seemingly straightforward stance was clarified and qualified by subsequent revelations. An 1833 revelation, for example, defined certain laws as "justifiable" or "constitutional" if they supported "principles of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges." And while the Latter-day Saints were "justified" in "befriending" constitutional or justifiable law, they were also instructed: "Whatsoever is more or less than this, cometh of evil" (D&C 98:4–7).

One year later, Oliver Cowdery drafted "Of Governments and Laws in General," which was canonized and printed in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Some of its statements reflected broad support for governmental authority: "All men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside." Others included significant qualifications: "Religion is instituted of God; and . . . men are amenable to him, and to him only, for the exercise of it." At its heart, the statement is an articulation of a just-law theory grounded in religious liberty, suggesting that laws that "secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience" were just, while those that "dictate forms for public or private devotion," "control conscience," or "suppress the freedom of the soul" were unjust (D&C 134, esp. 1–7).

These revelations thus constituted the roots of a Latter-day Saint just-law theory, although since Mormons believed that the U.S. Constitution enshrined principles protecting "the free exercise of conscience," the Saints—especially the American variety—more often employed the term "constitutional" than "just." Similar to Gandhi and King, the Saints fiercely defended a strict fidelity to the rule of law, perhaps most succinctly expressed by Joseph Smith in 1842: "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law" (12th Article of Faith). But the scriptural distinctions between just and unjust laws—or "con-

stitutional” and “unconstitutional” laws, as they would have termed it—also provided a clear rationale for defying specific laws, especially when they threatened basic “rights and privileges.”

Thus, a Latter-day Saint just-law doctrine was well established before plural marriage was introduced to the Church and the world. But this controversial marriage practice would provide the theory’s greatest test. Consequently, when plural marriage was first made public, it was not surprising that Orson Pratt, whom Brigham Young designated to make the introduction and anticipating legal reprisals, began his speech by appealing to principles of religious liberty and just law:

I think, if I am not mistaken, that the constitution gives the privilege to all the inhabitants of this country, of the free exercise of their religious notions, and the freedom of their faith, and the practice of it. Then, if it can be proven to a demonstration, that the Latter-day Saints have actually embraced, as a part and portion of their religion, the doctrine of a plurality of wives, it is constitutional. And should there ever be laws enacted by this government to restrict them from the free exercise of this part of their religion, such laws must be unconstitutional.²⁷

In 1852 Latter-day Saints controlled the Utah Territorial Legislature and thus the local marriage laws, but Utah’s territorial status meant that its laws could be trumped by congressional legislation. Church leaders clearly foresaw a future struggle to retain their religious practices, although congressional action was not taken for another ten years. Having thus laid a foundation of just-law theory, at least some Church leaders began to anticipate how the Latter-day Saints might respond if and when the legal right to polygamy was threatened by national legislation. Brigham Young, for example, predicted in 1856 that antipolygamy advocates would eventually succeed in criminalizing plural marriage. But he also calculated a significant national cost to eradicate the practice: “They will have to expend about three hundred millions of dollars for building a prison, for we must all go into prison. And after they have expended that amount for a prison, and roofed it over from the summit of the Rocky Mountains to the summit of the Sierra Nevada, we will dig out and go preaching

²⁷Orson Pratt, August 29, 1852, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers Depot, 1854–86), 1:54.

through the world.”²⁸

Even accounting for Brigham Young’s characteristic hyperbole, the intent of his sermon was clear. Rather than submitting to an unjust law, the Latter-day Saints would appeal to a higher law and endure imprisonment rather than surrender their religious principles. Such sentiments startled at least one member of the audience. Brigham Young’s first counselor, Heber C. Kimball, exclaimed from the stand, “What will become of the women, will they go to prison with us?” To which Young replied, “They will be with us, for we shall be here together.”²⁹ Brigham Young’s strategy, improvisational as it was, clearly indicates an inclination to consider deliberate mass breaches of the law—by both men and women—thus overwhelming the penal system, straining the national resources, and frustrating the implementation of the law.

Fortunately for the Saints, when legal restrictions were implemented in the Morrill Act of 1862, the nation—and more importantly, its chief executive—were distracted by the Civil War. Consequently, antipolygamy legislation was only feebly enforced in Utah, especially since enforcement was largely in the hands of Mormon territorial officers.³⁰ Nevertheless, the law created for the Latter-day Saints what John Rawls called a “conflict of duties.” According to Rawls, a “nearly just society” provides a special challenge for those who perceive “serious violations of justice” and yet also “recognize and accept the legitimacy of the constitution.”³¹ Such a “conflict of duties” is an apt description of the Latter-day Saint position at the time, and it was reflected in the rhetoric. The Saints were not “traitors,” Brigham Young insisted. They intended to “sustain the Constitution” and would “not secede from our Government,” but they also would not be “traitors to Jesus Christ.”³²

Because enforcement of the Morrill Act was at first relatively nonexistent, this “conflict of duties” remained largely theoretical for almost two decades, until stronger measures were enacted. In the in-

²⁸Brigham Young, August 31, 1856, *Journal of Discourses*, 4:38–39.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Richard D. Poll, “The Legislative Antipolygamy Campaign,” *BYU Studies* 26, no. 4 (1986): 6–7.

³¹Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 319.

³²Brigham Young, January 19, 1862, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:157–58.

terim, Latter-day Saints pinned their hopes on the possibility that the law might be overturned as unconstitutional. Consequently, a nomenclature of “constitutional law” became prominent in public sermons. Brigham Young, for example, declared: “I stand for Constitutional law, and if any transgress, let them be tried by it, and, if guilty, suffer its penalty.”³³ By this statement, he declared both the Saints’ fidelity to the law in general and also specifically exempted those who were defying the “unconstitutional” Morrill Act. Likewise, in 1864 he observed: “The anti-polygamy law has yet to be tested, as to its constitutionality, by the courts which have jurisdiction” and expressed the hope that eventually government officials would recognize its unconstitutional nature.³⁴ But if not, many Latter-day Saints—including women—were clearly prepared to take the step of civil disobedience, to publicly suffer the legal penalties for their religious beliefs. Speaking in 1870 to a women’s mass meeting that protested impending antipolygamy legislation, Phoebe Woodruff, Wilford Woodruff’s first wife, proclaimed her strategy of resistance:

Shall we, as wives and mothers, sit still and see our husbands and sons, whom we know are obeying the highest behest of heaven, suffer for their religion, without exerting ourselves to the extent of our power for their deliverance? No; verily no! God has revealed unto us the law of the patriarchal order of marriage, and commanded us to obey it. . . . If the rulers of the nation will so far depart from the spirit and letter of our glorious constitution as to deprive our prophets, apostles and elders of citizenship, and imprison them for obeying this law, let them grant this, our last request, to make their prisons large enough to hold their wives, for where they go we will go also.³⁵

By raising the specter of thousands of LDS women willingly suffering incarceration for their religious rights, Phoebe Woodruff employed classic civil disobedience rhetoric. It challenged the popular image of Latter-day Saint women as victims of Mormon patriarchy, flipped conventional characterizations, and tried to evoke a sense of shame by characterizing national reformers as unjust oppressors who

³³Brigham Young, March 8, 1863, *Journal of Discourses*, 10:109.

³⁴Brigham Young, August 19, 1866, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:269–70.

³⁵Phoebe Woodruff, quoted in “Great Indignation Meeting,” *Deseret News*, January 19, 1870, 6.

would be so depraved as to imprison women.³⁶

APOGEE

Although thousands of Latter-day Saints, with the encouragement of Church leaders, disregarded the Morrill Act after its enactment in 1862, their resistance was not thoroughly tested, and their civil disobedience not fully engaged, until George Reynolds became the first person convicted under the law and his conviction was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1879.³⁷ With the “constitutional” question finally settled—erroneously, the Latter-day Saints believed, but nonetheless decisively—the Saints now faced a more starkly delineated “conflict of duties.” John Taylor succeeded Brigham Young in 1877, and he declared the Supreme Court decision illegitimate, a position adopted by most Mormons: “I do not believe that the Supreme Court of the United States . . . has any right to interfere with my religious views, and in doing it they are violating their most sacred obligations.”³⁸

Following the Supreme Court decision, Church leaders more fully articulated a framework for civil disobedience, highlighting the Latter-day Saint community’s fidelity to the rule of law but also maintaining, notwithstanding the Supreme Court’s decision, that the anti-polygamy laws were unjust and unconstitutional. Echoing the 1831 revelation that “he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land,” George Q. Cannon, Taylor’s first counselor, argued in October 1879 that “men and women who live in accordance with the Gospel are the best people in the world” because their behavior exceeded the requirements of most laws: “Now I take issue, you know, with some laws. Some laws are constitutional, and some laws are unconstitutional, but a man who believes in and practices the

³⁶For the contest over women’s experience in polygamy, see Sarah Barringer Gordon, *The Mormon Question: Polygamy and Constitutional Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 96–102.

³⁷Edward Brown Firmage and Richard Collin Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts: A Legal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 151–59.

³⁸As quoted in Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, 399.

Gospel of Jesus Christ will live so far above every constitutional law that he will never violate it.”³⁹

To insist that the Latter-day Saints had not and would not violate “constitutional” law became a staple statement over the next decade. But Church leaders also insisted that, if the nation persisted in sustaining unconstitutional laws, the Saints were willing to endure the consequences. Orson Pratt, for example, declared that five years in the penitentiary would not alter his religious beliefs: “If they were to inflict the full penalty of the law upon me in every respect, how much would they succeed in converting me that my belief and practice were a crime in the sight of God? Not one iota, forty-five millions of people to the contrary notwithstanding.”⁴⁰ And Lorenzo Snow claimed that the nation could not alter Latter-day Saint faith in plural marriage “by imprisonment or any kind of persecution. We will stand by it unto death.”⁴¹

But it was John Taylor who most thoroughly articulated a strategy of civil disobedience. On at least two occasions, he publicly related the following story to illustrate its essential principles:

Some few years ago, I remember being brought before a court to give evidence in a case. I was asked if I believed in keeping the laws of the United States. I answered Yes, I believe in keeping them all but one. What one is that? It is that one in relation to plurality of wives. Why don't you believe in keeping that? Because I believe it is at variance with the genius and spirit of our institutions—it is a violation of the Constitution of the United States, and it is contrary to the law of God. Now this is plain. You could not tell your feelings much plainer. This was before the Supreme Court affirmed the constitutionality of that law. “Well,” said a man to me, “Are you prepared to abide the consequences[?]” “Always,” said I, “every where.” That is straightforward, and in saying this, I only expressed the feelings of thousands of my brethren and sisters. Well, then, whose business is it? If I do a thing and am prepared to abide the penalty, whose business is it? Do I interfere with the friends or government of the United States? No.⁴²

While reaffirming his commitment to breach an unjust law and

³⁹George Q. Cannon, October 6, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:340.

⁴⁰Orson Pratt, October 6, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:327.

⁴¹Lorenzo Snow, October 6, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:332.

⁴²John Taylor, November 30, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:353, and

suffer imprisonment, Taylor also characterized the antipolygamy law as a political trap to ensnare the Saints, saying that national reformers were complaining “because we do not run right into the trap and say ‘take us and put us in prison.’ We are not such big fools yet, we have very different ideas to those.”⁴³ Church leaders clearly wanted to control the terms of the struggle as best they could. If the Latter-day Saints went to prison, as John Taylor and the rest of the Church leadership would later encourage them to do rather than sacrifice religious principle, then they would try to control events and interpretations as best as possible—to make prison, if it came to that, a matter of martyrdom rather than an effective weapon of control over the Saints.

As John Taylor put it, “The question resolves itself into this: having received a command from God to do a certain thing and a command from the State not to do it, the question is what shall we do?” The thrust of his public remarks bent towards civil disobedience, but such a drastic step required rationale and precedent. Rather than appealing directly to American political theory or recent historical patterns, Taylor reached further back into sacred space and time: “Daniel had a political trap set for him, as we have had for us. An edict was passed forbidding him to pray to his God under penalty of death; he went and opened his window and prayed in the sight of the community, hence he violated that decree with death staring him in the face.”⁴⁴ Acknowledging that President Rutherford B. Hayes did not seem as kindly disposed toward the Latter-day Saints as Darius had been to Daniel, Taylor still saw a clear analogy between their situations and hoped to appeal to the good will of other potential rescuers in the larger American society: “Despotic laws require a despot, and not even packed juries will always carry them out.” Having laid out the options, John Taylor put the question to a congregational vote:

Taylor, October 6, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:317.

⁴³Taylor, November 30, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:353–54.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 355. Latter-day Saints frequently appealed to the Bible for admirable examples of civil disobedience. The *Millennial Star*, for example, opined: “There are any number of precedents on record . . . showing how former-day Saints acted in open violation and defiance of the laws.” It then recounted several such precedents, including the Hebrew midwives in ancient Egypt, Daniel and his companions, Esther, and even Jesus. “Obey the Law,” *Millennial Star* 37, no. 4 (January 26, 1875): 52.

“What shall we do? Shall we trust in God or in the arm of flesh? Shall we give up our religion and our God and be governed by the practices that exist in the nation which are contrary to the laws of God? All who are in favor of abiding by the laws of God hold up their right hand [The congregation voted unanimously]. We find the same feeling throughout the Territory.”⁴⁵

With his audience resolved to continue violating this particular unjust law, even in the face of the Supreme Court’s decision, Taylor was keen to highlight the Saints’ fidelity to just laws and the constitutional system: “But have we resisted anything else? No. Have I? No. Have you? I presume not. . . . Shall we abuse the people of the United States? No. Shall we abuse the President of the United States? No. . . . Shall we forsake the institutions of this country because of the acts of those men? No, we will cleave to them and sustain them.”⁴⁶

The practice of civil disobedience thus became an official and public strategy of the Church. Responding to this intransigence, Congress passed increasingly harsh measures to make the prosecution of polygamy easier and also to impose political and economic penalties upon the LDS community.⁴⁷ But in spite of these pressures, the Latter-day Saints held remarkably true to their civil disobedience tactics over the 1880s.

PECULIARITIES

While the Latter-day Saints clearly engaged in civil disobedience in a broad sense, several elements of their campaign represent important departures from standard civil disobedience theories and tactics as they were later refined. First, while the calls to resist antipolygamy laws were open and public, the disobedient acts themselves—the ceremonies that created the plural marriages and the living arrangements after the marriage were solemnized—remained hidden and private. Plural marriage ceremonies had always been private, but their continued secrecy, and the fact that plural households went “un-

⁴⁵Taylor, November 30, 1879, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:354–56.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 356.

⁴⁷For an overview of the legislative measures, see Firmage and Mangrum, *Zion in the Courts*, 160–209; Richard D. Poll, “The Legislative Antipolygamy Campaign”; and Gustive O. Larson, *The “Americanization” of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, Calif.: Huntington Library, 1971).

derground” during the 1880s, contrasted sharply with later civil disobedience campaigns where a public breach of the law was usually an integral part of the strategy.⁴⁸

Moreover, once Church members were arrested and indicted, they were advised to plead their innocence and resist prosecution, surrendering as little legal ground as possible and mounting every conceivable challenge to indictments in the federal courts. As John Taylor’s First Presidency counseled from hiding in a general epistle to the Church: “Every case should be defended with all the zeal and energy possible. Let us contend for our rights, inch by inch, and not yield a particle to the demands of those who are assailing us.”⁴⁹ This advice would appear to violate a key principle—that people engaging in civil disobedience willingly submit to the legal penalties.

However, these seemingly disqualifying differences are mitigated by two important factors. First, as already noted, the calls to disobey the antipolygamy laws were publicly declared from pulpits and through general epistles by the highest officers of the church. Second, and perhaps more important, Latter-day Saints who were convicted and served time were often referred to as “prisoners for conscience’ sake,” implying that the community perceived their imprisonment as a conscientious and public form of protest.⁵⁰ Statements at sentencing lend further credence to this interpretation. Federally appointed judges often offered convicted Latter-day Saints the choice between freedom (on condition of renouncing their plural marriages and promising to henceforth obey monogamy laws) or imprisonment (if they insisted on maintaining their plural marriages and holding to their doctrinal commitment to plural marriage). This choice forced defendants to take public positions, with responses transcribed into the judicial record and reported by local newspapers. The over-

⁴⁸There is some debate among theorists about whether a public breach is a necessary element of civil disobedience. See, for example, Brian Smart, “Defining Civil Disobedience,” 206–7.

⁴⁹John Taylor and George Q. Cannon, “Defense of the Constitution of the U.S., May 26, 1885,” in James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1833–1964*, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965–75), 3:16.

⁵⁰The title was first applied to George Reynolds but soon became widespread. “‘Christian’ Mercy and the Prisoner for Conscience Sake,” *Deseret News*, July 2, 1879, 8.

whelming majority of defendants conscientiously and publicly chose God over the state. Twenty-seven-year-old future apostle Rudger Clawson set the standard at his sentencing in November 1884 when he declared, "I very much regret that the laws of my country should come in conflict with the laws of God; but whenever they do, I shall invariably choose the latter. If I did not so express myself, I should feel unworthy of the cause I represent."⁵¹ Others, such as John Nicholson, a popular author and orator, followed suit: "My purpose is fixed and I hope unalterable. I shall stand by my allegiance to God, fidelity to my family, and what I conceive to be my duty to the Constitution. . . . I am prepared to receive the favor of the court."⁵²

Such strict public fidelity to both law and conscience was underscored in 1886 when a new governor offered pardons to nearly fifty penitentiary inmates, including Clawson, in return for their pledges to obey antipolygamy laws in the future. After considering the governor's proposal, the inmates declared they would rather suffer "perpetual imprisonment . . . or even death itself" rather than pledge themselves to obey unjust laws. They then observed, "The proposition you made, though doubtless prompted by a kind feeling, was not entirely new, for we could all have avoided imprisonment by making the same promise to the courts; in fact, the penalties we are now enduring are for declining to so promise."⁵³ Consequently, while Latter-day Saints generally avoided arrest and strenuously fought their indictments, once they were convicted they publicly embraced their incarcerations as expressions of conscientious resistance.

Many emerged from the penitentiary as community heroes. In some instances, they were "met at the prison doors with brass bands and a procession with banners, escorted to their homes to be toasted, extolled, and feasted as though it were the conclusion of some brilliant and honorable achievement."⁵⁴ Such open celebrations, along with the public endorsements regarding disobedience of the anti-po-

⁵¹Quoted in "The Rudger Clawson Case," *Deseret News*, November 5, 1884, 12.

⁵²Quoted in "John Nicholson," *Deseret News*, October 21, 1885, 1.

⁵³As quoted in Edward William Tullidge, *History of Salt Lake City* (Salt Lake City: Star Printing Company, 1886), 106.

⁵⁴The Utah Commission Report, 1889–90, quoted in Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah*, 186.

lygamy laws, thus offset the secretive nature of the actual marriages.

Yet another way in which Latter-day Saint civil disobedience was significantly different from later practices was the manner in which they expected their disobedience to effect a positive outcome. Civil disobedience strategies, as they came to be developed by Gandhi and King, were intended either to convert the oppressors or frustrate the enforcement of the unjust law. Notwithstanding Brigham Young's hyperbolic statements in the 1850s, the Latter-day Saints did not consciously pursue a "fill the jails" strategy in the 1880s (although the increasing number of inmates did put a severe strain on Utah Territory's penitentiary system).⁵⁵ As already noted, the primary goal was to keep Latter-day Saints out of jail. Did they then intend to convert or at least shame their oppressors by their suffering? There is some evidence for this position, as the Saints often highlighted the injuries and injustices that stemmed from zealous enforcement of the anti-polygamy laws. Franklin S. Richards, an attorney and the son of Apostle Franklin D. Richards, implied this strategic goal at a mass meeting in 1885 that prepared and published a list of grievances: "We have been grossly abused and sorely oppressed. We now turn to this great nation of freemen for vindication and redress."⁵⁶ But while Latter-day Saints "may have hoped that the public would be outraged by prisons peopled by humble and otherwise law-abiding men," they appealed even more frequently to the conscience of the nation by describing severe consequences to women and children.⁵⁷ A meeting of two thousand Mormon women, for example, resolved to send a memorial to the U.S. President and Congress outlining certain abuses under the anti-polygamy laws which had been "the means of inflicting upon the women of Utah immeasurable sorrow and unprecedented indignities, of disrupting families, of destroying homes, and of outraging the tenderest and finest feelings of human nature." It tried to appeal to the national conscience by providing detailed descriptions of

⁵⁵Overcrowding forced federal officials to transfer prisoners to other states, and U.S. marshals requested that judges delay prison sentences. *Ibid.*, 183.

⁵⁶"Mormon" *Protest against Injustice: An Appeal for Constitutional and Religious Liberty*, reported by John Irvine (Salt Lake City: Jos. Hyrum Parry and Co., 1885).

⁵⁷Gordon, *The Mormon Question*, 161.

women, sometimes pregnant or with babes in arms, being incarcerated “under the same roof with murderers, burglars and other convicts,” or relating how foul-mouthed officers peered into bedroom windows, burst through bedroom doors, and snatched away bed sheets.⁵⁸

But achieving conversion through suffering was not necessarily the primary dynamic in which the Saints saw themselves engaged. As a people who perceived themselves in biblical terms, the Latter-day Saints naturally foresaw a biblical outcome to their struggle. Had not God saved Daniel from the lions’ den? Had he not rescued Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the furnace? In a similar way, Church leaders predicted a divine rescue for the Mormon people if they proved their worthiness by fearing God instead of man. While Martin Luther King later attempted to build a “beloved community,” with nonviolent activism as a core element in preparation for Jesus Christ’s second coming, the nineteenth-century Saints did not see their nonviolent resistance as the key to any future millennial condition, expecting rather that Christ Himself would establish a permanent peace and, in the process, rescue them from their oppressors.⁵⁹ As John Taylor declared in 1882, “The Lord, through simple means, is able to take care of and deliver His people. . . . We are in the hands of God, and this nation is in His hands and he will do with us and them according to the pleasure of His will.”⁶⁰ A month later, he more fully articulated what he believed would be God’s intervention: “The Lord has a way of His own in regulating such matters. We are told the wicked shall slay the wicked. He has a way of His own of ‘emptying the earth of the inhabitants thereof.’ A terrible day of reckoning is approaching the nations of the earth. . . . Congress can ill afford to set a pattern of violation of that Constitution which it has sworn to support. The internal fires of revolution are already smouldering in this nation, and they need but a spark to set them in a flame.”⁶¹

This apocalyptic prediction was tempered by hope for a more peaceful resolution—“We will stand by our covenants, and the Consti-

⁵⁸“The Ladies’ Appeal,” *Deseret News*, March 31, 1886, 2.

⁵⁹Martin Luther King Jr., *Struggle to Love* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961).

⁶⁰John Taylor, March 5, 1882, *Journal of Discourses*, 23:38.

⁶¹John Taylor, April 9, 1882, *Journal of Discourses*, 23:63.

tution will bear us out in it”—but Church leaders generally looked outward to God for their temporal and political salvation rather than to some dynamic within the civil disobedience strategy itself.⁶²

RETREAT

By the late 1880s, however, it was clear that LDS defiance of the antipolygamy laws was not working as expected. God did not seem to reward the Saints for their fidelity to divine law. Instead, their continued defiance of national law was fortifying national resolve to not only eradicate plural marriage but perhaps also destroy the Church. Given the divine rescue that many Saints expected, this pattern was frustrating and disappointing. But many of the highest Church authorities began to consider the possibility that God might wish to effect other forms of deliverance. As George Q. Cannon told his son Frank in 1888, “The Lord can rescue us, but we must put forth our own efforts.”⁶³ Consequently, Church leaders began casting about for alternative strategies and praying for guidance on how to proceed. Those efforts included signals to national political leaders that there might be room for accommodation on plural marriage.⁶⁴ This shift was formalized by revelation in September 1890, when Wilford Woodruff, who succeeded Taylor as prophet and Church president, publicly declared: “Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise” (D&C Declaration 1).

This “manifesto” did not immediately end all resistance to federal law.⁶⁵ But it did initiate a retreat from new plural marriages and from strategies of civil disobedience. George Q. Cannon, in his April 1891 general conference, outlined some of the disappointed hopes of their now-abandoned strategy:

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Quoted in Larson, *The “Americanization” of Utah*, 228.

⁶⁴Edward Leo Lyman, *Political Deliverance: The Mormon Quest for Utah Statehood* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 124–42.

⁶⁵B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 167–90.

We felt as though we would gladly go to prison, that we would endure all the penalties that could be inflicted upon us legally to vindicate the principle of religious liberty. . . .

We endeavored by our sacrifices to arrest the progress of this crusade against our religious liberty; we honestly believed that we had a right to act as we did. That we have failed, however, in persuading the nation, that we have failed in making apparent to the people and convincing them of this, is very clear at the present time. . . .

I hoped at one time that our persecutions, and the manner in which the courts were proceeding against us, would have the effect of calling the attention of the nation to those wrongs under which we were suffering. But it is a lesson of history, repeated in our case, that persecutions only increase by the addition of victims. Every victim adds more to the flame of persecution.⁶⁶

Cannon's comments clearly indicate that, in addition to general expectations of miraculous intervention, at least some LDS leaders perceived the resistance effort as a classic civil disobedience dynamic: that the suffering of the Saints would engage the mechanisms of moral suasion to convert their oppressors. But that dynamic had failed. Acknowledging what certainly must have been a common sentiment among the Latter-day Saints, Cannon admitted, "I have been compelled to acknowledge my own blindness; I never had such a feeling concerning my own ignorance and inability to comprehend the plans and purposes of God." Nevertheless, he concluded to trust that "God is controlling this work to suit His own purposes and to fulfil His own designs."⁶⁷

Six months later, speaking at the Logan Stake Conference in November 1891, Wilford Woodruff described the futility of continuing to employ a civil disobedience strategy: "If we had not stopped [plural marriage] . . . all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners." Nevertheless, to underscore the revelatory, rather than political, nature of the new policy, he also reasserted his personal willingness to continue to defy the law if God had so commanded: "I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should

⁶⁶George Q. Cannon, April 6, 1891, in Brian H. Stuy, comp. and ed., *Collected Discourses Delivered by Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others, 1886–1889*, 5 vols. (Burbank, Calif.: BHS Publishing, 1987–92), 2:212–13.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 2:214.

have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write.”⁶⁸

Thus the “longest continuously sustained record of planned civil disobedience in the history of this nation” ended in a way that no one anticipated—with the destruction of the immediate objective (plural marriage), but with the preservation of LDS temple rites and, by accommodating the nation’s monogamous standards, a foundation for greater prosperity and social acceptance in the future.

Consequently, since the 1890 Manifesto, the LDS community has increasingly downplayed its experiment with civil disobedience. Stung by accusations of depravity and disloyalty during the campaign to sustain plural marriage—and perhaps disenchanted by the failure of their principled defiance of the law—Latter-day Saints approached the twentieth century with an eagerness to prove their loyalty to the nation, their fidelity to its laws, and their essential morality. Thus, by the mid-twentieth century, a Latter-day Saint heritage that included civil disobedience was creating tension with an increasingly prominent image grounded in conservative lifestyles and patriotic politics.

The contrast between these competing images was inconveniently highlighted by schismatic sects that continued to defy the nation’s antipolygamy laws. John Taylor had died in hiding rather than compromise on plural marriage, and fundamentalist Mormons in the twentieth century frequently appealed to his unfaltering intransigence to defend their actions. In 1951, Apostle John A. Widtsoe responded to some of their claims in the *Improvement Era*, framing his argument with the question: “Did John Taylor Advocate Lawbreaking?” Widtsoe’s primary purpose was to counter claims that President Taylor had received revelations or set apart men to hold fast to plural marriage regardless of future Church policy.⁶⁹ But he went even further by suggesting that Taylor had known that “under God’s law, when the practice of a principle is forbidden under the law of the

⁶⁸“Excerpts from Three Addresses by President Wilford Woodruff Regarding the Manifesto,” *LDS Doctrine and Covenants* (1981), 293.

⁶⁹In defiance of LDS Church officials, schismatic sects had gradually developed a narrative that emphasized a line of priesthood authority that superseded official Church ecclesiastical structures and that valorized all extralegal efforts to maintain plural marriage doctrine and practices. This

land, the people are held guiltless if the principle is not obeyed.” To bolster this suggestion, Widtsoe included an extensive quotation from John Taylor regarding the Edmunds Act, an 1882 statute that had tried to circumvent the legal challenge of proving multiple marriages by defining a new crime called “cohabitation”:

I looked carefully over the document, and saw that if I was to continue to live in the same house with my wives that I should render myself liable to that law. I did not wish—although I considered the law infamous—to be an obstructionist, or act the part of a Fenian, or of a Nihilist, or of a KuKlux, or Communist, or a Molly Maguire, or any of these secret societies that are set on foot to produce the disintegration of society. . . . I desired to place myself in obedience, or in as close conformity as practicable to the law. . . . Therefore I have sought to place myself in accord with that law. I said to my wives: . . . “Under the circumstances, it will be better for me or for you to leave this place; . . . for I wish to conform to this Edmunds Law as much as I can.”⁷⁰

This was a fairly narrow example of conformity to a particular legal provision. But Widtsoe’s primary purpose was to counter fundamentalist claims of legitimacy for law-breaking and to demonstrate the essential law-abiding nature of Latter-day Saints. Regardless of the motivations, Widtsoe’s 1951 interpretation of the 1880s historical record—an interpretation that glossed over Taylor’s calls for general and open resistance to antipolygamy laws—indicates that, after decades of strenuous efforts to win a measure of national respect, many Latter-day Saints wished to distance themselves from any strategies that might be perceived as unpatriotic.

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Such discomfort only increased over subsequent decades, as the theory and practice of civil disobedience—and, more importantly, the term itself—became increasingly associated with political turbulence, racial unrest, and cultural chaos. Led by Martin Luther King, the civil rights movement demonstrated the effectiveness of carefully planned

fundamentalist theology had coalesced by the 1930s. Brian C. Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006), 193–209.

⁷⁰John A. Widtsoe, “Did John Taylor Advocate Lawbreaking?” *Improvement Era* 54 (February 1951): 78–79.

and scrupulously disciplined civil disobedience campaigns in the service of overturning unjust racial laws. By the mid-1960s the burgeoning anti-war movement had adopted similar tactics. But by the decade's end, both movements began to splinter, with some activists becoming impatient at the slow pace of change. Rather than promoting strictly nonviolent, conscientious, and narrowly targeted challenges to specific unjust laws, these radicalized splinter groups began to advocate revolutionary, even violent, strategies for overthrowing broad social and political institutions.⁷¹ Within the context of this radicalization, the term "civil disobedience" became somewhat malleable, expanding and contorting to include almost any act of defiance or law-breaking, regardless of how well it conformed to the strict parameters outlined by Gandhi and King. Consequently for many observers, especially conservatives who generally resented social disruption, "civil disobedience" became "a code-word describing the activities of muggers, arsonists, draft evaders, campaign hecklers, campus militants, anti-war demonstrators, juvenile delinquents and political assassins."⁷²

Given such derogatory (albeit technically inaccurate) connotations, Latter-day Saint leaders, who had since the middle of the twentieth century largely affiliated with conservative politics, decried "civil disobedience" as sowing seeds of chaos. This distaste for such tactics was likely compounded by the fact that, by the late 1960s, the Church itself became the target of civil rights activists who wished to highlight and encourage changes to its priesthood restrictions. Although formal civil disobedience strategies were not generally employed against the Church—activists preferred protests and boycotts—these efforts to pressure the Church into policy changes gave Latter-day Saints first-hand experience with the disruptive power of social activism more broadly defined.⁷³ Assuming a defensive posture against such pressures, many Latter-day Saints were inclined to see anything associated

⁷¹Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954–1992*, rev. ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), and Stewart Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1990).

⁷²Marshall Cohen, "Civil Disobedience in a Constitutional Democracy," *Massachusetts Review* 10 (Spring 1969): 211.

⁷³Margaret Blair Young and Darius Aidan Gray, "Mormonism and Blacks," in *Mormonism: A Historical Encyclopedia*, edited by W. Paul Reeve

with social activism—including civil disobedience strategies—as catalysts for unnecessary discord and disunity within their national and religious communities.

In October 1967, President David O. McKay referred to the “treachery” of civil disobedience, characterizing those who encouraged such strategies as “insidious forces” attempting to “induce contention and confusion.”⁷⁴ Six months later, as the country was exploding with urban riots in the wake of Martin Luther King’s assassination, two apostles invoked the term “civil disobedience” in their conference talks. Ezra Taft Benson, a senior apostle and future Church president, quoted a political newsletter that referred in passing to the “bloody blackmail of America by permitting, even encouraging, mounting civil disobedience” as it went on to decry a larger litany of national political sins.⁷⁵ But Howard W. Hunter, another senior apostle and future Church president, and, unlike Benson, an attorney, addressed the strategy of civil disobedience in a more focused way, demonstrating a personal struggle to come to terms with its principles. Speaking of a “solemn obligation” to obey the law, he asked a question remarkably similar to the one John Taylor posed to the Saints nearly a century earlier: “If a conflict should arise with respect to allegiance [to God or the state], which should take precedence?” In the nineteenth century, facing the heavy hand of government, John Taylor and other LDS leaders had found inspiration in the example of the principled disobedience of Daniel and his companions in ancient Babylon. But by the late 1960s, when anarchy seemed to be a more significant threat than tyranny, Elder Hunter found greater comfort in Christ’s counsel to: “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). From this admonition, Elder Hunter

and Ardis E. Parshall (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 276–77. For an analysis of the Church’s relationship to the civil rights movement and its internal discussions regarding the priesthood ban, see Gregory A. Prince and Wm. Robert Wright, *David O. McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2005), 60–105.

⁷⁴David O. McKay, October 6, 1967, *One Hundred Thirty-Seventh Semi-annual General Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [hereafter cited as *Conference Report*] (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, semi-annual), 10.

⁷⁵Ezra Taft Benson, April 6, 1968, *Conference Report*, 51–52.

surmised that there were “two empires of heaven and earth” with different areas of sovereignty. The Saints could surrender “temporal things” to earthly governments while retaining the “heart and soul” for God, and therefore there was “no real conflict which creates a serious question as to allegiance.”⁷⁶

To further bolster his argument, Elder Hunter appealed to Doctrine Covenants 134. While quoting verses asserting that Latter-day Saints “do not believe that human law has a right to interfere in prescribing rules of worship to bind the consciences of men, nor dictate forms for public or private devotion,” Elder Hunter chose instead to emphasize the admonition that “all men are bound to sustain and uphold the respective governments in which they reside” and the observation that “sedition and rebellion are unbecoming every citizen” (D&C 134:4–5). Consequently, he concluded: “This is a day when civil disobedience seems to be prevalent and even advocated from some pulpits, but the position of this Church and its teachings is clear. . . . There is no conflict between that which is owed to Caesar and the obligation to God.” Such sentiments were echoed in subsequent decades in the authoritative setting of general conferences.⁷⁷

Thus, accurately or not, the term “civil disobedience” came to signify in mainstream Latter-day Saint parlance a general “disrespect for law and order.” But it also came to be linked with other social ills. In 1969, Elder Hunter once again invoked a specter of “civil disobedience” by including it in a list of “conditions plaguing our modern society,” such as “expanded use of drugs and barbiturates, increase in venereal diseases, and an accelerating divorce rate.” Such negative associations were unfortunately aided by amateur secular philosophers who employed the term in more and more expansive ways to connote defiance of general moral standards rather than—as Gandhi and King intended—as a strategy for challenging specific unjust statutory laws. Demonstrating that Latter-day Saint leaders were sensitive to extreme characterizations of “civil disobedience,” Spencer W. Kimball, in 1972, the year before he became Church president, quoted an unnamed radical teacher who apparently advocated a rather loose inter-

⁷⁶Howard W. Hunter, April 6, 1968, *Conference Report*, 64–65.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, 65–66. For subsequent examples, see N. Eldon Tanner, “The Laws of God,” *Ensign*, November 1975, 83, and L. Tom Perry, “A Meaningful Celebration,” *Ensign*, November 1987, 71–72.

pretation of the tactic: “Tell your students for me, if they want freedom they are going to have to get it the same way the Negroes get it, by taking it and defying the law by civil disobedience. And every time they go out on a date and have sexual intercourse they are practicing civil disobedience.”⁷⁸

This notion of “law” was far afield from principles advocated by mainstream political theorists—not to mention Gandhi and King—but was not unusual for that era. Such misrepresentations of the dynamics of civil disobedience influenced many people, both in and out of the church, to associate it with licentiousness and with challenges to the whole notion of “authority.”⁷⁹ And these associations with immorality and chaos cast a long shadow, not only over the term, but also over the principles and legacy of civil disobedience. As late as 1995, for example, more than twenty-five years after the turmoil of the 1960s, Apostle James E. Faust, then a counselor in President Gordon B. Hinckley’s First Presidency, associated “civil disobedience” with anarchy and violence in an address at the annual Freedom Festival in Provo, Utah. Ironically, his remarks were directed at restraining conservative activists who might be tempted to employ civil disobedience in a crusade against abortion, thus indicating how far the ideological ground had shifted since the protest movements of the 1960s. Still, President Faust demonstrated his general disapproval of civil disobedience, regardless of which side employed it, and strongly implied that such methods were inevitably intertwined with anarchy and violence:

Civil disobedience has become fashionable for a few with strongly held political agendas. Even when causes are meritorious, if civil disobedience were to be practiced by everyone with a cause our democracy would unravel and be destroyed. Civil disobedience is an abuse of political process in a democracy. . . . Recently I heard a new convert to our Church urge that the Church resort to civil disobedience and violence because of the moral wrongness of abortion. . . . I tried to explain that when we disagree with a law, rather than resort to civil disobedi-

⁷⁸Quoted in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 106.

⁷⁹For a brief but insightful analysis of how the concept was transformed, see Bruce C. Hafen and Marie K. Hafen, *The Belonging Heart: The Atonement and Relationships with God and Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), chap. 3.

ence or violence, we are obliged to exercise our right to seek its repeal or change by peaceful and lawful means.⁸⁰

Connotations of violence, licentiousness, and anarchy continue to adhere to the notion of civil disobedience as it is commonly understood in the Latter-day Saint community. As recently as April 2003, Presiding Bishop H. David Burton used the term “civil disobedience” pejoratively in a general conference address: “Our participation in life’s important events may be jeopardized if we fail to follow the rules contained in our Father in Heaven’s commands. Involvement in sexual sin, illegal drugs, civil disobedience, or abuse could keep us on the sidelines at key times.”⁸¹ Although Bishop Burton’s precise definition of the term is difficult to assess, the context clearly suggests he considered it to be a serious moral sin.

REMNANTS

Consequently, in the twenty-first century, the notion of an officially sanctioned mass Latter-day Saint civil disobedience campaign—with the same publicity, scale, and duration as the Church’s nineteenth-century struggle—has become virtually inconceivable. The term has certainly never been embraced by the whole Latter-day Saint community (and the word “disobedience” will probably keep it on the cultural margins). Nevertheless, some of the essential principles of civil disobedience strategy continue to be admired, even celebrated, by the broader LDS community, especially when they are employed in causes toward which Latter-day Saints are sympathetic and when the strict parameters of traditional civil disobedience—conscientiousness, nonviolence, openness, and fidelity to the rule of law—are observed. Mohandas K. Gandhi, for example, has remained an admired historical figure for Latter-day Saints, even though he was perhaps the one individual whose life was most closely associated with civil disobedience tactics.⁸²

Another notable example from the Latter-day Saints’ own his-

⁸⁰James E. Faust, *In the Strength of the Lord* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 276.

⁸¹H. David Burton, “And That’s the Way It Is,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 50.

⁸²Gandhi has been referenced and quoted many times, all of them approvingly, in general conference talks and Church publications. See, for example, Sterling W. Sill, “The Miracle of Personality,” *New Era*, March 1978,

tory is the story of Helmuth Hübener, a German teenager who defied the Nazi regime by illegally distributing news reports from the BBC and who was subsequently beheaded in a Gestapo prison in 1942. His resistance efforts were originally condemned by his LDS branch president, who excommunicated him. But within the last several decades, Hübener has been rediscovered by the Latter-day Saint community and is now commonly cited as an example of courage in the face of unjust oppression. His photograph and story have even been incorporated into at least one official LDS history instruction manual.⁸³

Likewise, in a 2009 speech on religious freedom, delivered to students and faculty at Brigham Young University–Idaho, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks, without ever explicitly using the phrase, approvingly described a quintessential civil disobedience campaign in Mongolia in 1990, where basic freedoms of speech, press, and religion had been denied by the Communist-majority government. Noting that “the full enjoyment of the people’s needed freedoms do not occur without a struggle,” Elder Oaks related the experience of Oyun Altangerel, a department head in the Mongolian state library, who “courageously took some actions” to defy her government:

Acting against official pressure, she organized a “Democratic Association Branch Council.” This 12-member group, the first of its kind, spoke out for democracy and proposed that state employees have the freedoms of worship, belief and expression, including the right to belong to a political party of their choice.

When Oyun and others were fired from their state employment, Oyun began a hunger strike in the state library. Within three hours she was joined by 20 others, mostly women, and their hunger strike, which

5; David B. Haight, “Love All,” *Ensign*, November 1982, 12; Neal A. Maxwell, “Shine As Lights in the World,” *Ensign*, May 1983, 10; Barbara B. Smith, “Love Is Life,” *New Era*, February 1986, 46; F. Melvin Hammond, “You Can Make a Difference,” *New Era*, March 1991, 44; and Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “Of Things That Matter Most,” *Ensign*, November 2010, 20.

⁸³*Church History in the Fulness of Times* [Institute of Religion manual] (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ or Latter-day Saints, 2003), 527. The Hübener story first became popular with Latter-day Saints audiences in 1979 through Thomas Rogers, *Huebener and Other Plays* (Provo, Utah: Poor Roberts Publications, 1992). See also Blair R. Holmes, Alan Keele, and Karl-Heinz Schnibbe, eds., *When Truth Was Treason: German Youth against Hitler: The Story of the Helmuth Hübener Group* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

continued for five days, became a public demonstration that took their grievances to the people of Mongolia. This demonstration, backed by major democratic movement leaders, encouraged other government employees to organize similar democratic councils. These dangerous actions expanded into a national anti-government movement that voiced powerful support for the basic human freedoms of speech, press and religion. Eventually the government accepted the demands, and in the adoption of a democratic constitution two years later Mongolia took a major step toward a free society.⁸⁴

By characterizing these acts of civil disobedience as courageous and constructive—rather than lawless or licentious—Elder Oaks endorsed the open and principled defiance of Oyun Altangerel and her companions in much the same way that nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints esteemed Daniel and his companions for resisting unjust Babylonian edicts. Thus, notwithstanding the aversion to the actual phrase, “civil disobedience” principles have claimed no small prestige in Latter-day Saint culture. But context matters. Employing civil disobedience against British imperialists, Nazis, or Communists has been more approved by Latter-day Saints than employing it against unjust American laws. It has been easier to perceive injustice and approve open resistance in foreign states than at home, and to retroactively endorse the actions of individuals rather than actively support and promote mass campaigns.

Still, even if Latter-day Saints are unlikely to adopt civil disobedience as a general tactic for effecting future change, the historical reality of their nineteenth-century mass public resistance remains an important heritage. Perhaps one day more non-LDS scholars may overlook their aversion to its goals and acknowledge the resistance to antipolygamy laws as an important and instructive chapter in the evolution of nonviolent strategies. If that were to happen, greater appreciation for the integrity, scale, and duration of the Latter-day Saint campaign might then fulfill a prediction made by George Q. Cannon in the wake of its defeat:

Whether our fellow citizens appreciate what we have done or not, we certainly feel that we have done a good work in thus standing in passive resistance—not active resistance—to the law which we regarded as

⁸⁴Dallin H. Oaks, “Religious Freedom,” speech delivered at Brigham Young University–Idaho, October 13, 2009, <http://www.mormonnewsroom.org/article/oaks-religious-freedom> (accessed February 1, 2013).

an encroachment upon religious freedom. Every patriotic man in this country ought to applaud a people or an individual who stands up in defense of any principle that pertains to human rights. We have done this—we intended to do it—to call attention to what we looked upon as a wrong. . . . We have utterly failed. . . . But the day will come—and I am not afraid to risk my reputation, if I have one, as a prophet—when that which we have done will be recorded with admiration and praise.⁸⁵

⁸⁵George Q. Cannon, April 6, 1891, in Stuy, *Collected Discourses*, 212–13.

ALMON W. BABBITT, JOSEPH E. JOHNSON, AND THE *WESTERN BUGLE*: AN LDS FRONTIER NEWSPAPER AT KANESVILLE

*Nicholas D. Harmon, Michael S. Huefner,
and Shauna C. Anderson Young*

“TRUTH, THO’ CRUSHED, SHALL RISE again” was the motto of the *Council Bluffs Bugle*.¹ This motto accurately describes the situation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) from 1852

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¹Motto positioned below the masthead, the *Council Bluffs Bugle*, De-

to 1856. The Church members who followed the Twelve had been exiled from their headquarters city in Nauvoo, Illinois, and now found themselves scattered across southwestern Iowa. Most of its leaders had already immigrated to the Utah Territory, but Kaneshville was established as the local headquarters for LDS members in Iowa. This article examines how the *Bugle* was used by its editors, Almon W. Babbitt and Joseph E. Johnson, to accomplish three purposes for Kaneshville's existence, by (1) unifying the members of the Church in the region, (2) encouraging emigration among those remaining in the area and marketing Kaneshville as an outfitting point, and (3) building up land values so that town lots and surrounding land could be sold at better prices.² A full understanding of the significance of the *Bugle*, however, first requires understanding its place in LDS history.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In 1849, hundreds of Latter-day Saints were still huddled near the banks of the Missouri River in Iowa. Kaneshville, the temporary headquarters for Mormons in the Midwest, was the last outfitting point for those trekking across the plains to the Salt Lake Valley, California, and Oregon. Even by 1852, while thousands of Mormons had relocated to the Great Salt Lake Valley,³ thousands more were scattered throughout the States and in foreign nations.

When the Latter-day Saints originally reached the Missouri River in the summer of 1846, almost the entire year of 1845 had been worn away by the long-lasting muddy spring that kept the exodus moving at a snail's pace, and Mormon leaders concluded that it was too late in the year for the main body of the Saints to continue west.⁴ They had journeyed across Iowa unprepared for the arduous trek

ember 21, 1852, 1.

²These purposes were never explicitly stated by the editors; however, we found ample evidence to suggest that these were their underlying goals for publishing the paper.

³Jean Trumbo, "Orson Hyde's Frontier Guardian," 76, quoted in William G. Hartley, "Council Bluffs/Kaneshville, Iowa: A Hub for Mormon Settlement, Operations, and Emigration, 1846-1852," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 26 (2006): 35.

⁴Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, 1839-circa 1882,

west. As a result, they established settlements in southwest Iowa and on the Nebraska side of the Missouri. These makeshift settlements enabled the weary travelers to build up supplies, plant crops, and rest from their hardships.

In April 1847, members of the Quorum of the Twelve and other Church leaders left Winter Quarters, the largest wintering settlement, leading a vanguard company toward their still uncertain refuge in the West. The famous entrance of the first pioneer company into the Salt Lake Valley in July 1847 located their new Zion. Brigham Young and other leaders journeyed back to the Missouri River to visit the Iowa and Nebraska Saints, among whom many were sick and dying of cholera, and to prepare their families for the trek in the spring of 1848. Surveying the situation, Brigham Young spoke enthusiastically of the “healthy locality in the mountains [and] suggested that those who could not go west next spring should vacate Winter Quarters and return to the east side of the river,”⁵ a healthier locale. In compliance, many Latter-day Saints crossed the river and settled in or around Miller’s Hollow, the settlement which came to be known as Kaneshville in honor of Colonel Thomas L. Kane, who had befriended the exiled Saints.⁶ Heeding Young’s instruction, the leaders in Kaneshville, which served as the outfitting point and temporary headquarters of the Church in that region, continued to encourage faithful Saints to prepare to migrate to Utah during the seasonal window when it was safe to travel—not only those who were still leaving Nauvoo and other sites in the Midwest but also new converts streaming in from the British Isles and Europe.

Enormous difficulties faced many of them. They were too poor to purchase the necessities of travel. In an effort to solve the problem,

June 7, 1846, holograph, LDS Church History Library, in Richard E. Turley Jr., ed., *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols., DVD (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, [2002]), Vol. 1, Disk 2 (hereafter cited as *Selected Collections*).

⁵Brigham Young, untitled speech, in Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), November 14, 1847, 1, LDS Church History Library.

⁶Journal History, April 8, 1848, 1; David J. Whittaker, *Colonel Thomas L. Kane and the Mormons, 1846–1883* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies/Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010), 50.

farming communities were established so that the less fortunate could obtain necessary funds for the journey. Others sought employment in river towns, especially the bustling city of St. Louis, Missouri. Fortune smiled on the stranded Mormons when the 1849 gold rush brought thousands of gold seekers through Kanessville on their way to California, giving a welcome boost to the economy.⁷ Stan and Violet Kimball claim that it was these people who may have given Brigham Young the idea for handcarts, as some of them successfully used wheelbarrows to cross the plains.⁸ The downside of this boom was a spike in trail equipment prices which made it difficult for Bishop Edward Hunter to care for the poor. LDS merchants in Kanessville tried to keep their trail merchandise affordable to help out the less fortunate.⁹ However, livestock commanded a seller's market, and Bishop Hunter "could not get broke cattle at any price."¹⁰

The emigration was more or less consistent from April 28, 1852, when the *Bugle* issued its first number, until May 26, 1857, when it was sold to a non-Mormon owner. While local Mormons were saving up to make the trek, Mormon converts from Europe and the British Isles began arriving to travel with them to Utah. The population was a fluid one, with demographics constantly changing. Thus, correct information about the number of residents in and around Kanessville is difficult to determine, and this article will not focus on that aspect.

THE WESTERN BUGLE

In these trying circumstances, two enterprising men founded a

⁷Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and Willard Richards, "Epistle" to Orson Hyde and Authorities of the Church in Pottawattamie County, Iowa, July 20, 1849, *Frontier Guardian*, September 9, 1849, 1.

⁸Stanley B. Kimball and Violet T. Kimball, *Village on Wheels: A Social History of the Gathering to Zion* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 161–62.

⁹Orval F. Baldwin II, "A Mormon Bride in the Great Migration," *Nebraska History* 58, no. 1 (Spring 1977): 57. This bride was Olive Harriet Otto Terry, who married Parshal (Percy) Adam Terry in Kanessville, spring 1852. She was a firsthand witness to this "great migration" and passed through Kanessville during this time.

¹⁰Franklin Keith Brough, *Freely, I Gave: The Life of Jacob G. Bigler* (Wichita, Kans.: Grit Printing, 1958), 39. Bigler was involved in managing the Perpetual Emigrating Fund under Bishop Hunter.

newspaper to unite the Saints, urge them to cross the plains, and encourage “Gentiles,” as non-Latter-day Saints were known, to buy Mormon property. The two men were Almon W. Babbitt and Joseph E. Johnson, and their paper was the *Western Bugle*.¹¹ They owned and managed the paper from its beginning in 1852 until 1857. For Babbitt and Johnson, both Latter-day Saint Democrats, their newspaper served as a natural expression of their feelings on both religion and politics. Babbitt, who came up with the idea for the paper,¹² was editor for a year and a half (April 28, 1852–September 7, 1853), while Johnson, his successor, was editor for three years (September 7, 1853–May 26, 1857).¹³ During these four and a half years, with increasing numbers of Saints streaming west, the *Bugle* continued to publish local LDS information to those who remained, as well as to non-Mormons who lived far away. According to Rufus Johnson, the youngest of Johnson’s twenty-nine children, the *Bugle* was distributed in Ohio, Wisconsin, Florida, New York, and Kentucky.¹⁴ Thus, it circulated outside Kaneshville, the local region, and Salt Lake City, earning a reputation as a valued and informative newspaper and perhaps providing an effective balance to the hostilities of other presses, particularly after August 1852 when the practice of polygamy was finally publicly announced. Although its owners were LDS and its primary audience was other members, it did not have the status of “official” newspapers like the *Prophet* in New York, *Deseret News* in Salt Lake City, or the *Western Standard* in San Francisco.

Almon Whiting Babbitt, born October 1, 1813, and converted sometime in 1830 in Amherst, Ohio, was a lawyer and merchant prior

¹¹The *Western Bugle* was also called the *Council Bluffs Bugle*, 1853–54, and the *Semiweekly Council Bluffs Bugle*, 1854–56. The paper switched back to being weekly on May 1, 1855, but retained “Semiweekly” in its title.

¹²Omer (Greg) W. Whitman and James L. Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel: Almon Whiting Babbitt—Territorial Secretary of Utah* (Baltimore, Md.: Publish America, 2009), 112.

¹³Joseph Johnson, “The Bugle,” *Western Bugle*, September 7, 1853, 2. This edition of the newspaper announces Johnson’s accession as editor.

¹⁴Rufus David Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown, Cassadaga to Casa Grande, 1817–1882* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1961), 187–91, 195–96.

to editing the *Western Bugle*.¹⁵ In Nauvoo, he had represented Joseph Smith in court on several occasions, was a trusted personal friend of Brigham Young, and associated with many other prominent men of the Church. He had been one of three trustees in charge of disposing of LDS property in Nauvoo after the exodus.¹⁶ He later carried a petition to Washington, D.C., seeking statehood for Deseret. He was also a staunch Democrat, a political orientation demonstrated by the amount of space in the *Western Bugle* devoted to furthering the Iowa Democratic platform. Additionally, Babbitt was an excellent entrepreneur, starting and running businesses that ranged from mail delivery to transportation service to Utah.

In 1850, Almon Babbitt moved his wife, Julia Johnson Babbitt, and their three children to Kaneshville. His plural wife, Maria Lawrence, had died in 1847 giving birth to their only child. Criticism among the LDS community started almost as soon as he arrived.¹⁷ Many Latter-day Saints contended that he had not done his best in disposing of Church property in Nauvoo, resulting in the loss of money needed to help the desperate Saints. The Church's auditing department later discovered, however, that he was in fact owed several thousand dollars.¹⁸ His energetic entrepreneurship led him into conflict with other Church authorities; and by the time he was killed by Indians in September 1856, he had been excommunicated once and disfellowshipped five times.¹⁹

Adding fuel to fiery criticism about Babbitt was the fact that he was a Democrat in the Whig-dominated Mormon party. Although Babbitt hosted a rally in August of 1850 in support of Democratic candidates among Mormons, his efforts failed. Some claimed it was because Babbitt accepted a bribe from the Democrats to host the party and purchased much liquor for the event. Apostle Orson Hyde and other influential Whigs were among those making such claims. They

¹⁵Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 17, 21.

¹⁶Journal History, January 24, 1846, 3.

¹⁷Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 64, 102.

¹⁸Almon Babbitt, "Read and Judge," *Western Bugle*, June 2, 1852, 2.

¹⁹Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 87, 105–6, 112–13. Whitman and Varner's findings were inconclusive about whether this excommunication was entirely valid.

also portrayed Babbitt as being publicly drunk at this event.²⁰

This was not the first time Babbitt and Hyde clashed. In 1848, Babbitt was touring the eastern branches and wards of the Church, and Hyde was also in the area with the intention of buying a printing press for a Church newspaper in Kanesville. The two then traveled to Washington together to poll local politicians about their feelings toward the Church. While on this trip, the politically minded Babbitt had tried to bribe Hyde to use his influence as an apostle to persuade some LDS members to vote for a Democratic candidate. He had offered to buy the printing press for him, but Hyde refused. The offended Babbitt later wrote a letter accusing *him* of doing exactly what Babbitt had asked him to.²¹ From then on, their personal and political problems spilled over into the columns of both the *Bugle* and the *Frontier Guardian*, which Hyde edited in Kanesville from February 7, 1849, to February 20, 1852.²²

Orson Hyde, a devoted Whig, bitterly opposed Babbitt's Democratic leanings and, on several occasions, including the incident of his alcohol purchases for the Democratic rally, tried to excommunicate him.²³ It is debatable whether this attempt could be considered valid, since Orson Hyde acted alone without the support of other members of the Twelve. Although Babbitt was never an apostle, he was still a high priest. It is not clear whether Hyde was acting on direct instructions or confirmation from Brigham Young.²⁴ Young later approved Hyde's similar action against Alpheus Cutler's membership, making it valid.²⁵ However, Whitman and Varner provide evidence that Babbitt's excommunication was not valid, so there is confusion about the real situation.²⁶

Hyde, as proprietor and editor of *Frontier Guardian*, used his newspaper to voice his Whig sentiments and encourage Mormons to

²⁰Ibid., 102–3.

²¹Ibid., 85–86.

²²Susan Easton Black, *The Best of the Frontier Guardian* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies/Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2009), 8–15.

²³Journal History, September 3, 1854, 1.

²⁴Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 105, 106, 112–13.

²⁵Danny L. Jorgensen, "The Cutlerites of Southwestern Iowa: A Latter-day Saint Schism and Its Role in the Early Settlement of Iowa," *Annals of Iowa* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1999): 142.

²⁶Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 112.

vote for Whig candidates. Hyde contended that the Whig Party would help the Mormons in Iowa, while Babbitt took the opposite stand. Babbitt felt that a Whig in office would be harmful to the Saints.²⁷ His prediction later came true, as Whig President Zachary Taylor's policies were detrimental to the Church.²⁸ Hyde, among many others, blamed Democrats for the federal government's inaction after the assassinations in June 1844 of Joseph and Hyrum Smith in allowing the repeal of the Nauvoo City Charter and for doing nothing to prevent local vigilantes from attacking and expelling Latter-day Saints, including the ill, the elderly, and women and children from Nauvoo after the brief and lopsided armed conflict known as the "Battle of Nauvoo" in September 1846.²⁹

Hyde claimed, "I am not a political man . . . having never cast but one vote in my life" before the exile from Nauvoo. After citing his earlier indifference to politics, however, he had been motivated to investigate the claims of various candidates and concluded that the Whig candidate for U.S. president in 1848,³⁰ Zachary Taylor, might be "the right man" to help the Mormons in their situation.³¹ When Babbitt began publishing the *Bugle* in April 1852, Hyde editorialized: "We welcome Friend Babbitt to the Editorial corps, and wish him success in every undertaking except his political exertions."³² The sincerity of Hyde's welcome is debatable. Two months earlier, Hyde had sold the *Frontier Guardian* to a non-Mormon attorney named Jacob Dawson of Fremont County, Iowa, and left for the Salt Lake Valley, following Brigham Young's instructions. The announcement appeared in the February 20, 1852, issue of the *Frontier Guardian*. Dawson politically supported the Whigs, removed primarily LDS material, and re-

²⁷Ibid., 86.

²⁸Ibid., 239.

²⁹Brough, *Freely, I Gave*, 35.

³⁰Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 85.

³¹Howard H. Barron, *Orson Hyde: Missionary, Apostle, Colonizer* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon Publishers, 1977), 183–87.

³²Orson Hyde, "The Bugle," *Frontier Guardian and Iowa Sentinel*, April 29, 1852, 2, MSS 298, Reel 21, item 4, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter Perry Special Collections).

named the paper the *Guardian and Sentinel*.³³

During his sixteen months as editor, Almon Babbitt teamed up with his brother-in-law, Joseph Ellis Johnson. Babbitt had married Johnson's oldest sister, Julia. In April 1852, the month the *Bugle* was first published, Johnson turned thirty-five. He had been born in Pomfret, New York, on April 28, 1817, one of the eleven children of Ezekiel and Julia Hills Johnson. Virtually the whole family had converted to Mormonism, and one of their sisters, Almera, had become a plural wife of Joseph Smith.³⁴ Like Babbitt, Johnson had acquired numerous skills and interests. He was known as a "wagon maker and blacksmith," and as proprietor of the Council Bluffs Mansion, which included "a confectionary, bakery, eating house and cabinet shop. In addition to all this he at times engaged in teaching school."³⁵ He wrote poetry, studied botany, concocted herbal remedies, and also served as postmaster and journalist, in addition to being proprietor and editor of the *Western Bugle* and many other later newspapers.³⁶ He and his wife, Harriet Snider, came to Kanesville in 1848, bringing along their first child.³⁷ When Orson Hyde left Kanesville, he and Apostle Ezra T. Benson trusted Johnson enough to make him the Church's general Claim and Property Agent for Kanesville.³⁸

Together, as LDS Democrats, Babbitt and Johnson launched the

³³Black, *The Best of the Frontier Guardian*, 13–15.

³⁴Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 82–83.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 17, 18, 31, 112.

³⁶In addition to the *Bugle*, Johnson also published, at other periods of his life, the *Omaha Arrow*, the *Crescent City Oracle*, the *Council Bluffs Press*, *Huntsman's Echo*, the *Farmer's Oracle*, *Our Dixie Times*, *The Rio Virgen Times*, and the *Utah Pomologist*. See Virgil V. Peterson, "Early Mormon Journalism," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 35, no. 4 (March 1949): 631; Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 415–19; George A. Miles, "Mormon Stories: A Librarian's Perspective," *Journal of Mormon History* 38, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 50–53.

³⁷Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 105, 481.

³⁸Almon Babbitt, "Claim and Property Agent," *Western Bugle*, May 26, 1852, 3: "Joseph E. Johnson, Esq., of Kanesville, is appointed general Claim and Property Agent, for the purpose of disposing of such claims and other property as our friends cannot dispose of before they go west. ORSON HYDE, EZRA T. BENSON. Kanesville, May 25, 1852."

Western Bugle.³⁹ A local historian in 1883 commented that the *Bugle* was “under Mormon influence, and had a Democratic leaning, in all cases, however, making political considerations subservient to the interests of the church.”⁴⁰ This is a fair assessment of the *Bugle*. Johnson had engaged periodically in journalism for years, having written for the *Frontier Guardian* under the pseudonym “Amicus” (Latin, “friend”), despite his differences with Hyde.⁴¹ While Babbitt and Hyde were obvious opponents, Johnson and Hyde were excellent friends. Considering that Johnson was just as editorially vocal about Democratic politics as Babbitt, one might conclude that the political differences between Babbitt and Hyde, although contentious, were not the source of disagreement. It may have stemmed from their differing personal qualities and characteristics.⁴² On one occasion, Brigham Young reminded the two men to “not permit trivial matters to influence you in the least” and that the Twelve “do not care a great [deal] about your political differences.”⁴³ To Brigham Young, the most important matter in Pottawattamie County was moving the Saints westward, not politics or petty disagreements.

The first issue of the *Western Bugle*, dated April 28, 1852, is filled with political and religious articles. One article mentions that the Iowa State Democratic Convention is being held that very day in Iowa City while another reprints an Orson Hyde letter, defending his character from claims of anti-Mormons in the Kaneshville area.⁴⁴ At the beginning of his letter, Hyde writes, “I crave, this once, your indulgence,

³⁹Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: John B. Alden Publisher, 1960), 542, quoted in Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 112; see also Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 184.

⁴⁰John H. Keatley, *History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa: Containing a History from the Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., 1883), 95.

⁴¹Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 107.

⁴²Whitmer and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 87, claim that Hyde disfellowshipped Babbitt for reasons probably “more personal than doctrinal.”

⁴³Brigham Young, quoted in Church Historian’s Office, *History of the Church, 1839-circa 1882*, July 20, 1849, in *Selected Collections*, Vol. 1, Disk 2.

⁴⁴Almon Babbitt, “Democratic State Convention,” *Western Bugle*,

in allowing my reply . . . to appear in the 'Bugle.'" It seems that Babbitt granted Hyde this favor because he knew that the Mormons in the area respected the apostle. Although the *Frontier Guardian* under Hyde's editorship printed negative comments about Babbitt, the *Western Bugle* never printed anything negative about Hyde or any other Latter-day Saint leader, other than in political articles. In fact, the *Bugle* several times defends Hyde's character and provides news of his whereabouts and activities.⁴⁵

Perhaps Johnson had an ameliorating influence as co-editor, or perhaps Hyde, now living in Utah, posed less competition for Babbitt. Because Hyde was a Church leader and apparently quite popular and influential with the Iowa Saints, the *Bugle* chronicled his activities, along with those of other prominent LDS leaders. Through its columns, we learn of Hyde's travels, slanderous accusations that he was a corrupt judge in the Fremont District Court just south of Kaneshville, that a Mr. Wilson had attacked him in the streets of St. Louis, and that Millard Fillmore had nominated him as associate justice of the Territory of Utah around June of 1852, but that the U.S. Senate had rejected the appointment.⁴⁶ Although there were political differences between the *Bugle* editors, a greater danger was anti-Mormons.

After Babbitt left the *Bugle* in Johnson's capable hands in September 1853, he journeyed west, opened a law practice in Salt Lake City, and became the city's postmaster and the *Bugle's* agent. He was also appointed territorial representative to the U.S. Congress in July 1849,⁴⁷ with a second appointment following as Territorial Secretary of Utah in July 1853. Babbitt gained the respect and appreciation of many Saints, but many others felt suspicion and even dislike for him.⁴⁸ Mormon leaders in Kaneshville were angry that Babbitt held a political rally that lavishly served drinks, and Babbitt was aware that

April 28, 1852, 21; Almon Babbitt, "For the Bugle," *ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁵Ignatius (real name unknown), "For the Bugle," *Western Bugle*, May 19, 1852, 2; Untitled notice, *Western Bugle*, July 21, 1852, 2.

⁴⁶*Western Bugle* articles: Ignatius, "For the Bugle," *Western Bugle*, May 19, 1852, 2; Almon Babbitt, "Disgraceful Assault," June 16, 1852, 2; Babbitt, Untitled notice, June 2, 1852, 2; Babbitt, Untitled notice, July 21, 1852, 2.

⁴⁷Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, 1839-circa 1882, July 5, 1849, in *Selected Collections*, Vol. 1, Disk 2.

⁴⁸Printed form notifying Babbitt of his appointment as Territorial

he was unpopular in Kirtland.⁴⁹ Although Babbitt was not directly involved in the later publications of the *Bugle*, it continued to report his accomplishments in his new assignment. To some, including many prominent men of the Mormon faith, Babbitt was a significant and well-known Latter-day Saint.⁵⁰

The *Bugle* also printed letters inquiring about the surrounding area, condition of the trails, etc., and then answered the inquiries and expounded on the fertility of the area.⁵¹ Subscribers in Utah also looked to the *Bugle* for information about relatives or friends still in Iowa or en route to the Salt Lake Valley, as well as reports on conditions in Utah, Nebraska, and other areas. His outlining of the events of the “runaway judges” was particularly interesting to the *Bugle’s* readers. On September 6, 1851, newly arrived Judge Perry Brocchus of the Utah Territorial Supreme Court spoke at a regular Sunday meeting at Brigham Young’s invitation. He spoke for over two hours, his rant escalating into accusations that Brigham Young had too much power and censure of the Saints for being too critical of the federal government. The audience finally lost patience when Brocchus insinuated that polygamous relationships were immoral and called the women to reclaim their virtue. As Jedediah M. Grant, mayor of Salt Lake, later described, “At this climax of insult, the meeting rose as one man, and their cries and uproar compelled the speaker to take his seat.”⁵² Later, Brocchus complained that the audience of Mormons seemed ready to “spring upon me like hyenas and destroy me.” Brigham Young spoke immediately after the judge, calming the upset Saints; but he also informed the judge that such comments were not welcome and that he, himself, had been offended as well.⁵³ Passions remained so high that Brocchus and his two fellow judges, along with

Secretary of State, June 30, 1853, Territorial Executive Papers, 1850–1896, Series 242, #537, Department of State to Babbitt, Utah State Archives, cited in Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 116.

⁴⁹Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint nor Scoundrel*, 103–4.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 97.

⁵¹Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 152–55, 189–91.

⁵²Jedediah M. Grant, “Grant’s Defense,” *Western Bugle*, May 5, 1852, 1.

⁵³Norman F. Furniss, *The Mormon Conflict* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1960), 24–26; Thomas G. Alexander, *Utah: The Right Place:*

the secretary, left Utah hastily on September 28, 1851. According to the *Bugle*, after they reached the East with their complaints, U.S. President Millard Fillmore ordered the officials to either return to Utah and fulfill their responsibilities or resign their appointments.⁵⁴

Jedediah Grant teamed up with Thomas Kane to write a series of letters to the *New York Herald*, the first of which was published in March 1852 and includes his description of the Saints' angry reaction to Brocchus's speech. Grant and Kane defended Mormons, especially those in Utah, from the rumors being circulated about the runaway judges.⁵⁵ The *Bugle* reprinted this letter. Grant's letter provided a credible description and defense of the Latter-day Saints, correcting general anti-Mormon material as well as incorrect details in the judges' reports. To the Mormons, the letter with its ardent and eloquent defense was a morale booster.

The judges requested that Brigham Young be replaced by a non-LDS governor, but President Fillmore upheld Young's appointment.⁵⁶ Around June of 1852, President Fillmore nominated Orson Hyde as an associate justice, and the *Bugle* offers a unique perspective on this political event.⁵⁷ Both Johnson and Babbitt knew Orson Hyde personally and, despite their political differences, were pleased with his nomination. They quoted a non-Mormon competitor's paper, the *Savannah Sentinel*, which complimented Hyde: "We are glad that the claims of Bro. Hyde have not been overlooked. . . . We presume he will consider this appointment a sufficient endorsement of his charac-

The Official Centennial History (Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1996), 119–20.

⁵⁴Almon Babbitt, Untitled notice, *Western Bugle*, June 2, 1852, 2.

⁵⁵Gene A. Sessions, ed., *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Grant* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 319–35; and Gene A. Sessions, ed., *Mormon Thunder: A Documentary History of Jedediah Morgan Sessions*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2008). There remains some controversy about whether Grant or Kane was the primary author of *Three Letters to the New York Herald*. See Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church: Volume 2, 1848–1852* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005), 322.

⁵⁶"Fillmore and the Mormons" (from the *Savannah Sentinel*), as seen in *Western Bugle*, June 9, 1852, 2.

⁵⁷"Editorial," *Millennial Star* 14 (June 12, 1852): 249.

ter.”⁵⁸ The editors used this great opportunity to publicly praise and support Hyde by publishing these comments. They could have taken the opportunity to use their own words once again, but perhaps they found it more effective to quote a writer who was not religiously linked to Hyde. The *Bugle* added: “We esteem Elder Hyde an honest man.”⁵⁹ However, the Senate refused to confirm the appointment.⁶⁰

Babbitt and Johnson had no qualms about contending with editors of differing political opinions, downplaying Whig victories in the state of Iowa and the nation’s capital. When other newspapers supported a Whig bill or candidate, the *Bugle* challenged it. In one issue, an article titled “Whig Victories” explained how many rival papers would tout the small success of the Whig party. Babbitt contended: “The Whigs have been so completely routed in all the regular contests, that they lay hold of the first appearance of signs in their favor.”⁶¹ Johnson responded defensively when other editors criticized him, often printing a rebuke, defending himself, and calling his attacker colorful names. In one instance, Johnson criticized the *Nebraska News* for wavering on political issues. Its editor, James Sterling,⁶² called Johnson a “Mormon,” intending it as an insult. Johnson lashed back: “So when he fails to find any plausible argument for us, he calls us a Mormon! Whew! Who ever heard the like! Don’t you think he spite[s] us? Why we were lately informed that Jeems [sic] was once a Mormon Preacher, but was excommunicated for immorality.—Oh! Consistency thou are a jewel!”⁶³ Johnson was not afraid to offend when defending himself.

⁵⁸“Fillmore and the Mormons” (from the *Savannah Sentinel*), 2.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰Almon Babbitt, Untitled notice, *Western Bugle*, July 21, 1852, 2.

⁶¹Almon Babbitt, “Whig Victories,” *Western Bugle*, May 19, 1852, 2.

⁶²Only one James Sterling has been definitely proved to have been a Church member around this time; however, he was born in 1840, which would have made him only about fifteen at the time of Johnson’s rebuttal. Therefore, despite the lack of a membership record, we may reasonably assume that this individual was a different James Sterling. Susan Easton Black, *Membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: 1830–1848* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1989), 41:406.

⁶³Joseph Johnson, “Oh! Consistency, &c.,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, October 30, 1855, 2. Johnson’s claim is unsubstantiated; at least if there was an

These personal attacks, though typical of period newspapers, went beyond politics and failed to demonstrate the validity of the political views Johnson was allegedly defending. Both Babbitt and Johnson devoted several columns of issues of the paper consistently to counterattacking editors who attacked him and his political allegiance. After one particularly virulent column, he apologized: "We candidly admit that such matters should not, under any circumstances, find a place in the columns of a family paper." As excuse, he blamed his "overweening propensity and the temptation" to argue.⁶⁴ Perhaps he was finally remembering the role of Thomas Sharp's bitter and malignant anti-Mormonism, expressed repeatedly in the columns of the *Warsaw Signal*, that had helped mobilize public sentiment against Joseph Smith and which had contributed in some measure to the assassinations of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Perhaps Johnson had temporarily lost sight of his paper's intended purposes and focused too much on the political aspect.

UNIFYING LDS MEMBERS

For the Saints who remained in the dozens of small settlements throughout western Iowa, making ends meet proved problematic. Despite their various backgrounds and previous occupations, nearly all were expected to farm. Since the Church leaders had left for Utah by 1848 and many small groups who believed in Joseph Smith but rejected the leadership of the Twelve were seeking members among the Saints on the frontier, those who stayed in Iowa needed spiritual nourishment and legitimate leadership. Utah was a harsh environment; fertile Iowa offered a tempting alternative to those whose faith was not strong enough to propel them across the plains. Whoever represented the Twelve in Iowa would need to urge remaining members to emigrate, to remind them, as historian Richard E. Bennett says, that "abandonment, not establishment, was the watchword."⁶⁵

There was also a great need to help the Saints financially. On at

excommunication, it didn't occur in Nauvoo. John Dinger, *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2011).

⁶⁴Joseph Johnson, "Gentle Reader," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, September 18, 1855, 2.

⁶⁵Church Historian's Office, History of the Church, 1839-circa 1882, January 16, 1848, in *Selected Collections*; Richard E. Bennett, *Mormons at the*

least one occasion, Hyde had the entire membership in the area fast and donate money to help the poor.⁶⁶ Even after 1852, financial assistance was still a necessity.

Babbitt and Johnson used their paper to preach the gospel. They published anecdotes or opinions on social and moral issues that supported LDS teachings but that did not directly involve Mormons. As more members moved west, the frequency of these items increased, suggesting that, when their readership was primarily LDS, the editors kept them informed and focused on Utah, but as the demographics of the town became more diverse and national, the editors focused more on moral dilemmas and on promoting LDS beliefs among those who might not have had contact with the Saints.

For example, Babbitt wrote, "A Warning to Smokers," which told of a young boy in France who died in his sleep from inhaling his parents' smoke.⁶⁷ Although the story ended sorrowfully, it supported the claims of the Church and its revelation that tobacco is "not for the body" (D&C 89:8). However, Johnson mentioned on occasion that he enjoyed smoking a "Havana."⁶⁸ In another issue in 1855, he told of seeing a few "lads" smoking cigars. He was amused yet "chagrined" at this misbehavior and warned that they must give up smoking if they "ever expect to gain a position and an eminence among mankind."⁶⁹ Perhaps he felt that smoking was acceptable for adults but not for youth, a position also held by many on drinking "responsibly." He advised in a different issue that when a young man is deciding whether to start smoking, the decision should always be negative. He also wrote of how addicting smoking can be and how, based purely on ex-

Missouri: Winter Quarters, 1846-1852 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), 215.

⁶⁶Journal History, October 6, 1851, 3.

⁶⁷Almon Babbitt, "A Warning to Smokers," *Western Bugle*, June 30, 1852, 4.

⁶⁸Joseph Johnson, Untitled notice, *Council Bluffs Bugle*, December 25, 1855, 3.

⁶⁹Joseph Johnson, "Mr. Bugler's Address to his Young Readers," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, October 2, 1855, 2. Although Mormon teachings on the Word of Wisdom differed over time, it did not become a condition of membership in good standing for almost a century.

pense, it should be avoided.⁷⁰ In spite of his personal bias against smoking, Johnson was in an advantageous position to promote Church standards to a large and diverse audience.

One topic that Johnson mentioned often was temperance—the restriction or banning of alcohol consumption. This was a hot topic of the day. Amelia Bloomer, a major figure in the temperance movement, lived in Council Bluffs at the time and lectured on the subject. The *Bugle* invited all to enjoy Mrs. Bloomer’s sermons, citing her “wide reputation as an able lecturer.”⁷¹ In another issue, Johnson wrote of the ill effects of whiskey and how it ruins families.⁷² Although Babbitt had a taste for liquor, there is no evidence that Johnson was thus sending him a pointed message. What is more likely is that both men considered drinking acceptable, but not drunkenness.⁷³

Johnson printed a letter from “Lizzie” of Omaha who warned of the evils of gambling and card playing. She encouraged women everywhere to discourage these vices “in what sphere they may.” Lizzie confessed that she had taught a friend to play cards who became addicted to gambling. He never learned to do a day’s work because of this vice, which also ruined his marriage and shortened his life. “This, dear reader,” she concluded, “is why I never play.”⁷⁴

As an editor, Johnson was increasingly worried about declining character and constantly implored his readers to be their best selves. He lamented the lack of old-fashioned mothers who would support their husbands and raise their children properly, since moral and social values begin in the home. He begged mothers to use “their goodness, their diligence, their usefulness, and knowledge” in creating re-

⁷⁰Joseph Johnson, “A Formidable Undertaking,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, April 17, 1855, 4.

⁷¹Joseph Johnson, “Thanksgiving—A Lecture from Mrs. Bloomer,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, November 20, 1855, 2.

⁷²Joseph Johnson, “Foul Murder in Atchison Co. Mo., by a Woman,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 7, 1855, 2. The murder had resulted because alcohol was involved.

⁷³Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 182.

⁷⁴Alex C. Pyper, “Religious Notice,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, April 6, 1855, 2.

sponsible, upright, and moral adults of tomorrow.⁷⁵ Johnson also warned women of the deceitful nature of men and taught that respectful men made the best husbands. He claimed that most men could ruin a woman's life through alcohol, gambling, smoking, and other vices.⁷⁶ He also warned young men about pretty girls whose beauty may conceal character flaws and encouraged both sexes to rise above their natural tendencies and look deeper.⁷⁷

On a few occasions, the *Bugle* announced LDS meetings being held in the Council Bluffs courthouse on Sunday afternoons. They also used the opportunity to invite others to join them: "The members . . . and those desirous to hear the doctrines called 'Mormonism,' are notified that there will be preaching at the Court House, every Sabbath, at 3 o'clock."⁷⁸ These announcements were signed by William H. Folsom, "presiding elder," and his two counselors. One article, without mentioning Mormonism, advised religious tolerance and warned readers not to dismiss new doctrines because they were unpopular.⁷⁹

To build morale among the destitute Saints in the region, the *Bugle* always adopted a positive and encouraging tone. Johnson, during his time as a writer for the *Frontier Guardian*, "wrote poetry, special articles on his travels," and "maintained a regular entertainment column, specializing in charades, rebuses, conundrums, enigmas and the like."⁸⁰ Among the notices are marriage announcements, invitations to parties, and amusing anecdotes. One issue included a song by an unknown author that was titled, "The Merry Mormons." The song promotes the Mormon faith and claims that the author "never knew

⁷⁵Joseph Johnson, "An Old Fashioned Mother," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, December 25, 1855, 3.

⁷⁶Joseph Johnson, "Ladies, Look Out for the Men!" *Council Bluffs Bugle*, February 12, 1856, 2.

⁷⁷Joseph Johnson, "Careful How You Dip," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, February 12, 1856, 2.

⁷⁸Wm. H. Folsom, F. A. Brown, L. O. Littlefield, "Religious Notice," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, October 23, 1855, 2.

⁷⁹Joseph Johnson, "Toleration," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, July 17, 1855, 2.

⁸⁰Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 107.

what joy was, till I became a Mormon.”⁸¹ Johnson also published an article in May 1855 describing how Saints in the Salt Lake Valley had enjoyed the winter, “eating, drinking, dancing, and going to the theater,”⁸² showing that Utahns had sufficient food and enjoyed “civilized” forms of entertainment.

ENCOURAGING EMIGRATION AND MARKETING KANESVILLE

Brigham Young made Kaneshville the local headquarters of the Church and appointed Apostle Orson Hyde as president of the Church in Pottawattamie County.⁸³ Brigham Young intended Kaneshville to be an outfitting trailhead for the journey west and felt that a well-ordered town would add value to the surrounding area, resulting in a better price for land and buildings, a financial boon for the Saints.⁸⁴ As Brigham Young viewed matters, Kaneshville could enhance religious unity, encourage emigration, and provide a sound local economy.⁸⁵

The *Bugle* adopted these goals, frequently printing news of developments and industry in Utah Territory. For example, in 1853, only six years after the first Latter-day Saints reached Utah, Salt Lake City had 7,000 inhabitants, hundreds of buildings and craftsmen, and was still growing.⁸⁶ The *Bugle* proudly announced that machinery was being shipped to the Salt Lake Valley for processing “sugar from the Beet” and that a wool factory was operative, showing Pottawattamie inhabitants the industrious and prosperous circumstances of the

⁸¹“The Merry Mormons,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, June 19, 1855, 1.

⁸²Joseph Johnson, “Salt Lake Mail,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, May 8, 1855, 3.

⁸³Keatley, *History of Pottawattamie County*, 86. The Latter-day Saints in the area named the street he lived on “Hyde Street” as an expression of esteem.

⁸⁴“General Epistle from the Council of the Twelve Apostles, to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Abroad, Dispersed Throughout the Earth,” *Journal History*, December 23, 1847, 1. This epistle advises the Saints “not to dispose of their claims for trifles, for every good claim would sell for a good price in cash or its equivalent in desirable property before the 25th of April.”

⁸⁵*Journal History*, October 2, 1848, 4.

⁸⁶Almon Babbitt, “The Mormons,” *Western Bugle*, October 5, 1853, 2.

Mormons in Utah.⁸⁷ Another article described settled land running about 350 miles from north to south and plans of founding settlements even farther south, “near Santa Clara.”⁸⁸ Another announced a six-to-eight-week expedition undertaken by “Governor Young and suite . . . to explore Green River and the Colorado with their vallies, and seek good locations for settlements.”⁸⁹ Another project was building a canal from Big Cottonwood Creek into Salt Lake City “for the purpose of boating granite rock . . . for the Temple and for building up this City.”⁹⁰ Such descriptions must have been exciting for the Iowa Saints and increased their own determination to reach Utah.

In 1855, the *Bugle* eagerly reprinted a report by a representative of a St. Louis newspaper who visited Brigham Young and toured the southern settlements. His report praised the Mormons, saying, the “enterprise, industry, and perseverance of these people are proverbial” and concluded with “I cannot close this communication without bearing my testimony to the peaceable and law-abiding feeling that universally prevails among them.”⁹¹ To read praise by a Missourian of the Latter-day Saints would have been very gratifying.

The *Bugle* received its information about Utah happenings through various sources. Naturally, it reprinted a great many items from the *Deseret News*.⁹² Johnson also maintained a correspondence with many individuals in the valley.⁹³ Babbitt himself, who made several journeys across the plains after purchasing a shipping and mail

⁸⁷Almon Babbitt, “Arrivals,” *Western Bugle*, May 26, 1852, 2.

⁸⁸Almon Babbitt, “Utah,” *Western Bugle*, June 2, 1852, 3.

⁸⁹Almon Babbitt, “Gone South Exploring,” *Western Bugle*, June 16, 1852, 2.

⁹⁰Joseph Johnson, “Salt Lake Mail,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, May 8, 1855, 3.

⁹¹Author unidentified, “Correspondence with the St. Louis Republic—Latest from Utah,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 14, 1855, 3.

⁹²Joseph Johnson, “Salt Lake Mail,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, May 8, 1855, 3.

⁹³Special Collections Department, *Register of the Papers of Joseph Ellis Johnson* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Libraries, 1977), 57; Juanita Brooks, ed., *Not By Bread Alone: The Journal of Martha Spence Heywood, 1850–1856* (Salt Lake City: Utah State Historical Society, 1978), 39, 62.

route contract, was another source.⁹⁴ Even after leaving the *Bugle*, he still wrote to his former partner, informing him of his own travels and of events in Salt Lake City.⁹⁵ Church leaders stopping at Kaneshville on their way to an assignment freely shared news and information—keeping the minds of the Saints focused on their eventual settling in Utah. This perspective was vital to continuous emigration, and the *Bugle*'s focus on the colonization of Utah represents its religious commitment to aid the Saints' emigration, especially since living in Iowa was financially remunerative and, during this period, saw no episodes of anti-Mormon violence.

Of the many visitors who came through Kaneshville, most notable was Apostle John Taylor, who passed through Kaneshville at least twice, once on his way back from a mission in France and later on his way to New York City.⁹⁶ In New York, Taylor published a newspaper called *The Mormon*. His purpose was to educate those in the eastern United States about Mormonism. The *Bugle* frequently reprinted items from this paper, explaining Mormon doctrine and news.⁹⁷ Also newsworthy were notices about missionaries who passed through Kaneshville en route to their various fields of labor. For example, Babbitt announced that Thomas Margetts, J. C. Armstrong, and the Wheeling family had arrived the week before, bound for the mission field in the "old world."⁹⁸

Babbitt also noted that the widow of Mr. Wheeling "returned," presumably to stay at Kaneshville while her sons served missions, although he does not mention whether her husband had died en route or in the mission field. In another issue, Johnson reported that "twenty-six Elders arrived from Utah, as missionaries to different parts of the United States and Europe."⁹⁹ In yet another issue, the editor mentioned that a Mormon elder in Texas was having astounding success

⁹⁴Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 89.

⁹⁵Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 252.

⁹⁶Almon Babbitt, "Arrivals," *Western Bugle*, May 26, 1852, 2.

⁹⁷"The Mormon," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, March 13, 1855, 2.

⁹⁸Almon Babbitt, "News from Utah and the Plains," *Western Bugle*, July 7, 1852, 2.

⁹⁹Joseph Johnson, "Arrival from Utah," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, November 13, 1855, 2.

and that his converts were moving to Salt Lake City.¹⁰⁰ Many members in Iowa would have felt encouraged by reading about the successes of the Church.

Just as the *Bugle* helped Latter-day Saints in missionary matters, it also printed news of emigration. Editors of the *Bugle* were experienced in journeying across the plains. By the time they started their paper, Babbitt had already made the crossing between Kanessville and Salt Lake City numerous times, thanks to his mail contract. Likewise, Johnson had made the trek several times. Returning to Iowa from one such journey, he wrote an “Emigrant’s Guide” and “became something of an authority on what to take and what to leave behind,”¹⁰¹ helping emigrants prepare to travel west.

Johnson’s “Abridged Mormon Guide” has seven tips for the emigrant, including what food to pack, how to select camping locations, and cautions about caring for draft animals.¹⁰² He proudly called his own guide the “best and most correct ever published,” available for sale in the *Bugle*’s office.¹⁰³ No doubt he also drew upon the experiences of his extensive family. On July 5, 1848, his brother, Joel Hills Johnson, wrote in his journal that his parents and many of his brothers and sisters left Winter Quarters for the Salt Lake Valley.¹⁰⁴ By 1852, most of Johnson’s family lived in Utah, giving him access to dozens of trail experiences, tips, and suggestions to include in his “Guide.” In the *Bugle*, Johnson and Babbitt shared their extensive trail knowledge, including trail conditions, gave advice concerning Indian encounters, and suggested food that would keep the traveler happy and healthy.

Most likely these health tips originated with Johnson. He was an experienced druggist, making and selling his own pills and concoc-

¹⁰⁰Almon Babbitt, “Mormonism in Texas,” *Western Bugle*, July 21, 1852, 4.

¹⁰¹Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 149.

¹⁰²Joseph Ellis Johnson, *Abridged Mormon Guide!* (Spring Lake, Utah: “Farmer’s Oracle” News Press, 1864), 1.

¹⁰³Joseph Johnson, “Important to Those Crossing the Plains,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, May 15, 1855, 2.

¹⁰⁴Joel Hills Johnson, “A Journal or Sketch of the Life of Joel Hills Johnson,” 19, Perry Special Collections. This journal covered his 1857–60 mission.

tions. For example, even though the role of vitamins in maintaining health was not known, he suggested taking along onions to satisfy “cravings.”¹⁰⁵ Other suggestions from the editors included taking pickles and fruits to help combat sickness, while acids—such as acetic, citric, and tartaric—could make palatable alkaline water that might be encountered.¹⁰⁶ Another tip was to store water and milk in wooden kegs or casks rather than tin vessels which, in the heat, made these beverages “nauseous.”¹⁰⁷

Perhaps as a scare tactic to those who were taking preparations lightly, the editors told of a man who traveled to California, surviving for ten days on broth made from a doormat because he ran out of food.¹⁰⁸ This story also warned against the growling stomachs, uncomfortably hot days, and idleness found within wagon trains. The advertisement section had information on which store sold what, and where the stores were located in Kanessville and the surrounding area. Armed with this information, no emigrant passing through Kanessville should have gone on the trail underprepared.

Mormons had first made the overland trail on the north side of the Platte River. Before that, emigrants to California and Oregon had taken the Oregon Trail which ran along the south side of the river. In the dispute over which trail was superior, the *Bugle* staunchly maintained the virtues of the Mormon Trail, especially since the trail began near Kanessville. More emigrants traveling on the northern route meant more emigrants passing through and buying supplies from Mormons in Kanessville. In September 1853, a letter by Ashel T. Barrett, a traveler on the northern trail, claimed he had journeyed to Fort Laramie from Council Bluffs in twenty days, an impressive feat. He praised the condition of the Mormon Trail as “the finest I ever saw, level as a plank road.”¹⁰⁹ In addition to praise of the Mormon Trail, the *Bugle* kept readers up to date on current travel conditions and the availability of ferries that could transport their wagons and animals

¹⁰⁵Joseph Johnson, Untitled notice, *Western Bugle*, April 28, 1852, 3.

¹⁰⁶Almon Babbitt, “Emigrants Be Wise,” *Western Bugle*, May 5, 1852, 2.

¹⁰⁷Almon Babbitt, “Water Vessels for the Plains,” *Western Bugle*, June 16, 1852, 2.

¹⁰⁸Almon Babbitt, Untitled notice, *Western Bugle*, June 30, 1852, 4.

¹⁰⁹Ashel T. Barrett, Letter to the Editor, *Western Bugle*, September 21,

across the many rivers. Ferry owners advertised in the *Bugle* about the locations of their ferries and their distances from Kanessville.

The paper also reported colorful accidents that occurred when emigrants were attempting to persuade their livestock to climb onto a ferry. Too often, the livestock got out of control, sinking the ferry or pushing their owners overboard. The *Bugle* defended the ferries on the Missouri, especially the Kanessville Ferry, claiming that accidents were due to anxious emigrants who would not listen to the ferrymen's instructions.¹¹⁰

While Babbitt was editor, Johnson filled in for him during his occasional absences. On one of his treks to Utah, Babbitt wrote to the office of the *Bugle*, sending back progress reports. He had crossed on the Loupe Fork Ferry and highly recommended it as "safe and fast."¹¹¹ Through their own experiences, the editors reinforced the words of others and lent validity to the stories of strangers. When it came to trail travel and information, the editors were highly respected in Kanessville and the surrounding areas. It is probably safe to say that the editors knew more than anybody in town about crossing the plains.

The paper reported a most fortuitous event for the crew of the steamer *El Paso*, which typically transported goods up and down the Missouri River. The steamer docked near Kanessville for five or six days to ferry people across the river of particularly heavy traffic. According to the *Bugle*, the steamer transported "500 wagons, 10,200 head of stock; and 200 people,"¹¹² and most likely made an enormous profit.

In a February 1855 issue, the *Bugle* reported that a meeting of the Nebraska legislature discussed eight ferries. The concern was whether the owners of the ferries wanted to renew their licenses, and whether permission should be granted to build new ferries.¹¹³ Readers of the *Bugle* were informed about ferry changes or additions, en-

1853, 2.

¹¹⁰Almon Babbitt, "Kanessville Ferry or Middle Ferry," *Western Bugle*, May 19, 1852, 2.

¹¹¹Almon Babbitt, "Letter from the Editor: Loupe Fork Ferry," *Western Bugle*, June 9, 1852, 2.

¹¹²Almon Babbitt, "The Times," *Western Bugle*, May 26, 1852, 2.

¹¹³"Nebraska Legislature (transcription)," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, February 2, 1855, 1.

abling westward-bound emigrants to plan their trips.

In October 1852, the *Bugle* announced the addition of a steam-powered ferry boat belonging to Thomas Sebring, marking a new level of technology in travel through Kanessville.¹¹⁴ The former frontier town was transforming into a thriving and prosperous city. The addition of still more steam ferries only a few months later illustrates the sheer number of westward-bound emigrants passing through the city. There were also occasional reports of bridge-building efforts in various locales with heavy emigrant traffic. Florence, Nebraska, and the Elk Horn River crossing on the northern trail both saw trail improvements during this time.¹¹⁵

Although Johnson and Babbitt shared political and business interests, Johnson had a greater and more observable affinity for Native Americans. Babbitt also supported the fair treatment of Indians but did not go to the lengths that Johnson did to help them. Before starting the *Bugle*, Johnson gathered a troupe of Omaha Indians to travel with him to Washington, D.C., to lobby for better treatment. Along the way, they performed tribal dances to draw audiences, increase awareness for their cause, and raise travel funds. They even put on a tribal dance for the President of the United States.¹¹⁶ Through being a shopkeeper for many years, Johnson had met many Indians, learned of their troubles and unjust treatment, and became sympathetic to their suffering. He does not comment to any extent on the sources of this sympathy, so it cannot be determined if he was influenced by the Book of Mormon, which classified them as among the descendants of the house of Israel. He was obviously progressive in his desire to further their rights and better their situation. However, he also recognized many of the problems whites faced in dealing with Indians. Jared Farmer underscores the dual identities that Indians had to Mormons. First, the "Indian-as-brother" view saw them as descendants of the Lamanites, heirs to many prophecies about future blessings and greatness. But second was the "Indian-as-other" view, an attitude of cultural superiority held by most whites, including many Mormons.

¹¹⁴Thomas Sebring, Advertisement for "Steam Boat Ferry," *Western Bugle*, October 20, 1852, 4.

¹¹⁵Daniel Norton, "Council Bluffs Agency Ferry," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, April 24, 1855, 1.

¹¹⁶Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 156.

In this view, Native Americans were savages who scalped and fought settlers.¹¹⁷ Ironically, Babbitt himself was killed and scalped by Cheyenne Indians in September 1856 in Ash Hollow, Nebraska Territory, on one of his journeys across the plains.¹¹⁸

As emigration through Kaneshville increased, the woes of the local Indians increased, too. Emigrants decimated the wild game population.¹¹⁹ Johnson wrote many articles and poems on the troubles of the “red man,” maintained his interest in the Indians, and showed concern for their well-being. He feared that too many emigrant and Indian interactions on the plains would end badly for both. Johnson used his influence as an editor to encourage fairness and good treatment of the Indians. In fact, it was on the way back from his trip to Washington that Johnson and Babbitt, who had met there, purchased the press that they used in starting the *Bugle*.¹²⁰

The *Bugle* attempted to educate subscribers to avoid conflict. In June 1855, for example, it reports large companies of emigrants who stopped moving because of the threat of an Indian attack. The *Bugle* recommended that they cancel their journey until the next year when the situation would probably improve.¹²¹

The *Bugle* also occasionally provided educational articles about Indian culture. One article by Babbitt described traditional Pottawattamie religious practices, in which a good spirit, Kitchemonedo, contests Matchemonedo, the evil one, for supremacy.¹²² The article drew interesting parallels with these beliefs and traditional Christian beliefs, such as the creation of the world by the good Spirit, a flood which destroyed humankind because of ingratitude and an unwillingness to acknowledge the creator, and origins of human life as a single man, placed on earth and followed by a woman. Any Latter-day Saint

¹¹⁷Jared Farmer, *On Zion's Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), 60–62.

¹¹⁸Whitman and Varner, *Neither Saint Nor Scoundrel*, 146–47.

¹¹⁹Almon Babbitt, “Omahaw [sic] Indians,” *Western Bugle*, May 5, 1852, 2.

¹²⁰Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 179.

¹²¹Joseph Johnson, “News from the Plains,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, June 19, 1855, 2.

¹²²Almon Babbitt, “Pottawattomie Theology,” *Western Bugle*, June 2, 1852, 1.

reader who believed that the Indians were remnants of the Lamanites would have surely seen the connections between the religion of the Indians and doctrine of Mormons.

In all LDS dealings with Native Americans, Johnson encouraged cooperation with the Indian agents at the local Bureau of Indian Affairs. They were expected to keep the peace between parties of emigrants and Indian tribes and to ensure that both received fair treatment. The editors often approved of the bureau's actions but were critical when the bureau missed important governmental developments. In May 1852, it reported that California-bound emigrants had killed four Pawnee who had requested a fee for using their lands and passing near Shell Creek, which was located on the boundary line between the Pawnee and Omaha. In addition to murdering the four Pawnee, the emigrants had chased down and wounded those who attempted to flee. The *Bugle* noted that this action endangered later emigrants and lamented: "Where is the Indian agent, whose duty it is to see the rights of the Indians, as well as the whites, protected?—If our memory serves us right, the last three years, when the emigration was passing through the country assigned to him, he has found it convenient to be smoking his cigar in some fine saloon in St. Louis, or elsewhere."¹²³

Two issues later, Johnson announced that Major (first name not given) Burrow, the Indian agent, reported that the Pawnees had no hostile intentions and would return to their lands for the rest of emigrant season. He also noted that an express message should be sent to Fort Kearney in case of an emergency.¹²⁴ Apart from this incident, the *Bugle* usually praised the efforts of Indian agents in maintaining the peace between emigrants and Native American tribes.

Unfortunately, when Native Americans are mentioned in the paper, much of the time it is concerning the deaths of emigrants, Indians, or both. One report described several murders in Texas, claiming that aggression was expected anywhere the "white man" met the "red man."¹²⁵ Other articles announced that mail service from Utah or California had been interrupted and that the carriers had presum-

¹²³Almon Babbitt, "Four Indians Murdered," *Western Bugle*, May 19, 1852, 2.

¹²⁴Almon Babbitt, "Pawnee Indians," *Western Bugle*, June 2, 1852, 2.

¹²⁵Almon Babbitt, "Later [sic] from Texas," *Western Bugle*, June 9,

ably been killed by Indians.¹²⁶ The *Bugle* also carried reports that Indians near Payson, Utah, had shot Alexander Keele and other settlers in Utah Territory.¹²⁷

These accidents were typical of most newspaper reporting of the time, especially frontier papers. What made the *Bugle* unique was that it most often defended Indians and charged the emigrants with respecting the Native American way of life. Such reports reminded prospective emigrants of whose land they were crossing. The *Bugle* reported that the whole region around Kaneshville had belonged to the Pottawattamie before the government bought it and relocated the tribe. Reflecting his own sympathies, Johnson printed stories of conflict and death involving Indians to inform his readers of their plight and suffering. During Babbitt's editorship, he published an account of how "over forty Indians—men, women, and children, were found frozen to death, having eaten their dogs and moccasins" in Minnesota.¹²⁸ This and other pitiable accounts of the Indians evoked awareness of their plight and perhaps reduced emigrant fears of the Native Americans.

Given the large amount of space that the *Bugle* devoted to Native Americans and other West-centered information, it clearly saw a major part of its audience as emigrants, gold diggers, travelers, and adventurers. Situated on the border of "civilization," it was ideally placed to receive and send news, advice, and encouragement to prospective travelers, whether Mormon or Gentile.

BUILDING UP LOCAL LAND VALUE

With the decline in Mormon population by the late 1850s, the *Bugle* could deemphasize its goal of westward migration and concentrate on the economic aspects of the town and county that would aid the Mormon economy. Since 1852, the paper had tried to advertise Kaneshville as the best outfitting point for crossing the plains. As time passed, however, it began publishing articles focused on potential land owners and investors. In December 1855, the *Bugle* triumphantly announced that the land office of Kanesh-

1852, 3.

¹²⁶Almon Babbitt, "From Utah," *Western Bugle*, June 16, 1852, 3.

¹²⁷"From the *Deseret News*: Indian Difficulties," *Western Bugle*, September 21, 1853, 1.

¹²⁸Almon Babbitt, Untitled notice, *Western Bugle*, June 30, 1852, 3.

ville, now named "Council Bluffs," had made five hundred land warrants in the past week: "We defy any other office on the continent to beat it. . . . Let those who want the best lands in the universe for a mere pittance, come!"¹²⁹ Land sales boomed as Johnson became the chief advertiser for Kanesville and the surrounding area. He credited Bernhart Henn, Iowa's representative to the House of Representatives (a Democrat, of course), for giving Kanesville citizens the right to purchase land for \$1.25 per acre.¹³⁰ Before this time the land still was not legally purchasable, as it was recognized as Indian land still.¹³¹

The *Bugle* noted in August 1855 that Iowa sold more public land than any other state—more than three million acres of the fifteen million acres sold that year in the United States, constituting one-fifth of the land sales in the thirty-one states.¹³² Johnson also reported that nearly 150,000 acres were sold at the Kanesville land office between March and July of 1853.¹³³

One likely reason that Johnson marketed Council Bluffs so heavily was that he wanted to help Mormons who had not been able to sell their land or improvements earlier to make the trek west. Most issues announce several land sales, either by a business, the sheriff, or individuals. Since the Saints had never purchased their land to begin with and had only been "squatting" on the land they lived on, they could sell their "improvements" (their fences, farms, houses, etc.) that they had worked so hard to build up from nothing. If there was an interested party, the Saints were sometimes able to sell their improvements to incoming settlers.¹³⁴

Unfortunately, individuals would sometimes attempt to sell land that they did not own. A man named L. A. Brewster in four

¹²⁹Joseph Johnson, "Can Any Land Office Beat it?" *Council Bluffs Bugle*, December 25, 1855, 3.

¹³⁰Almon Babbitt, "Glorious News! Our Town Secure!!" *Western Bugle*, July 14, 1852, 3.

¹³¹Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 220.

¹³²Joseph Johnson, Untitled notice, *Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 28, 1855, 3.

¹³³Joseph Johnson, "A Land Office Business," *Western Bugle*, September 7, 1853, 2.

¹³⁴Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 118, 120, 220.

consecutive 1852 issues of the *Bugle* advertised land for sale that he did not own; but in the fifth issue, the editor exposed him as a fraud who had absconded with \$2,000, leaving his debts unpaid.¹³⁵

Brewster seems to have been an exception, however. The *Bugle's* remaining stories on this topic report the buying and selling of homes, farms, and unimproved tracts of land. On three known occasions, the editor listed mills for sale: one within two and a half miles of Council Bluffs, another within two miles, and a third eight miles from the city. Each was described as potentially a highly successful business. In 1855, Johnson said that the county had eight mills but that more were needed to meet local needs. Thus, Johnson encouraged entrepreneurs to invest in Council Bluffs in diverse ways, by purchasing land, farms, stores, or, in this case, a mill.¹³⁶

Land disputes occurred frequently because of the way in which Pottawattamie County was settled. The refugee Mormons did not have legal rights to settle on the land, nor did they intend to become permanent residents. They were given permission by the United States government and the Native Americans in the area to temporarily use the land;¹³⁷ and when the emigration began in 1848, they simply left. Those who remained behind without intending to emigrate, or who found Iowa more to their liking, did so as squatters until the first land office opened in Council Bluffs during the spring of 1853.¹³⁸ Although supplying legal title, such patents often revealed conflict between neighbors who had not determined boundary lines. Announcements of what plots belonged to whom were often printed in the *Bugle* as a means of staking claims and hoping to avoid direct confrontation. Cornelius Voorhis, a resident and shop owner in the area¹³⁹ (LDS membership unknown), was involved in two of these disputes at the

¹³⁵Joseph Johnson, "L. A. Brewster [illegible]—Look Out for Him," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 21, 1855, 2.

¹³⁶William Slaughter, "Saw Mill for Sale," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, February 23, 1855, 2.

¹³⁷Bennett, *Mormons at the Missouri*, 63, 106–9.

¹³⁸Keatley, *History of Pottawattamie County, Iowa*, 26.

¹³⁹Black, *The Best of the Frontier Guardian*, accompanying CD-ROM.

same time.¹⁴⁰ Later, he demanded that Thomas Hancock transfer a land warrant to him or “appear in court.”¹⁴¹ The result of this demand is unknown.

Over the years, as “outsiders” moved to Council Bluffs, the city expanded its boundaries several times to accommodate the new settlers. It was a source of local pride that a frontier town thus attracted outsiders. Announcements of available lots in Hall’s, Johnson’s, Grime’s, and Beer’s Additions began appearing in 1855 issues.¹⁴² Several notices announce land sales in neighboring areas, such as Glenwood, Omaha City, and Nebraska City.¹⁴³

Another way in which Johnson saw an opportunity to market Council Bluffs to the Gentiles was in advertising and promoting the sale of *Iowa: As It Is in 1855* written by Nathan H. Parker of Davenport, Iowa. Two issues of the *Bugle* included the book’s introduction to tempt readers into buying the full volume. The book attempted to market Iowa to businessmen, farmers, and manufacturers.¹⁴⁴ Obviously, the editor was not the only one to advertise the superiority of Iowa land. Parker, perhaps in gratitude for the *Bugle*’s publicity, included an article by Johnson describing the landscape and attributes of Council Bluffs and the surrounding area. Unfortunately, the book mistakenly calls the paper the *Council Bluffs Eagle* instead of the *Council Bluffs Bugle*.¹⁴⁵

Marketing land prices, transactions, and availability were important to the *Bugle*’s editors, as demonstrated by the many lengthy articles dedicated to these topics. Johnson was a talented writer and ener-

¹⁴⁰Joseph Johnson, Untitled notice, *Council Bluffs Bugle*, March 2, 1855, 2.

¹⁴¹C. Voorhis, “Notice,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, September 4, 1855, 2.

¹⁴²See *Council Bluffs Bugle*: Joseph Johnson, “City Lots for Sale!” May 1, 1855, 2; L. A. Brewster, “Valuable Building Lots for Sale,” July 24, 1855, 1; Johnson, Casady, & Test, “100 Choice Lots,” October 23, 1855, 2.

¹⁴³E. P. Deupree, “Sale of Lots in Glenwood!” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, May 15, 1855, 2; John Boulware Jr., “Public Sale of Lots, in South Nebraska City, N.T.,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, October 9, 1855, 2.

¹⁴⁴N. H. Parker, “Iowa—As it is in 1855,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, June 12, 1855, 1.

¹⁴⁵Nathan H. Parker, *Iowa: As It Is in 1855* (Chicago: Keen and Lee, 1855), 186.

getic marketer with a passion for furthering the growth of Council Bluffs. Although increased land prices in Council Bluffs and Kaneshville obviously benefited the Saints who were financing their trip west, it appears that Johnson also had personal motives. By 1855, most members of the Church had gone west, and Kaneshville was left in the hands of the Gentiles. Johnson remained, perhaps overstaying himself. From Johnson's laudatory editorials, it seems that he had fallen in love with Council Bluffs and the region, reinforced by his financial and business interests in the area. Johnson described the area around Council Bluffs as a paradise for poor people trapped in the overcrowded eastern states and that Iowa promised "temporal salvation to the dispirited and bowed down."¹⁴⁶ He praised Iowa's fertile topsoil as "the most excellent land that was ever trod by the foot of the white man." He lauded the geography and natural resources, listed needed jobs and businesses, and celebrated Council Bluffs' healthy climate.

Furthermore, he depicted a booming economic future. Other towns in the region were growing quickly. Three railroads being built across Iowa would have their termini in the Council Bluffs area. He concluded: "Our future prospects for becoming a great central mart of business, commerce, and enterprise are undisputed. Everything indicates that Council Bluffs, will, at no very distant day, be the great metropolis of the West, as New York is to the East."¹⁴⁷ Although optimistic, this prediction was not ludicrous. In November of 1863, U.S. President Abraham Lincoln signed an executive order making Council Bluffs the center of the transcontinental railroad.¹⁴⁸ However, for many reasons, the Union Pacific Railroad decided on Omaha, making it the region's dominant city.

In 1856, the *Bugle* quoted a statement by an unidentified man from Glenwood calling Johnson "the acknowledged creator" of Council Bluffs and the town itself as "your [Johnson's] flourishing city." Johnson was flattered. He had been in Council Bluffs since the late 1840s and had befriended Henry Miller, the area's first settler

¹⁴⁶Joseph Johnson, Untitled notice, *Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 14, 1855, 2.

¹⁴⁷Joseph Johnson, "Council Bluffs," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, November 27, 1855, 2.

¹⁴⁸Lawrence H. Larsen and Barbara J. Cottrell, *The Gate City: A History of Omaha* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 25.

and founder of Miller's Hollow, which later became Kaneshville. He had seen the tiny village grow into a thriving frontier city, to whose vitality he had materially contributed. In that same issue, Johnson wrote about residents who had made great profits selling land, followed by his "certainty" that Council Bluffs would become "a second Chicago, in Rail Road and business" which would "continue to increase the value of property very rapidly."¹⁴⁹ He was truly proud of the city. However, the call to come to Utah was sounding more intense, not only from Church leaders, but also from his cousins, siblings, and mother who had asked, in virtually every letter, when he would join them.¹⁵⁰

Johnson's journey west began in early August 1861 and ended in Salt Lake City about seven weeks later. The exact length of his stay in the city is unknown, but it was only temporary. His years in the open prairies of Nebraska probably motivated his move to a less crowded tract of land about seventy miles south which he named Spring Lake Villa. There he began publishing *The Farmer's Oracle*, an "agricultural and horticultural sheet more on the order of a small magazine, but including such regular news as he might obtain."¹⁵¹ As he aged, he moved farther and farther south, publishing several more papers before his death in Tempe, Arizona. By the end of his life, he had three wives (Harriet Snider, Hannah Maria Goddard, and Eliza Saunders) and twenty-nine children.¹⁵²

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, an important phase for this newspaper drew to a close. Babbitt and Johnson, and later Johnson alone, had managed this paper, supporting the emigration of thousands of Saints and other immigrants headed west and helping those who stayed in Kaneshville long enough to acquire land to sell it at a healthy profit. Babbitt and Johnson used the *Bugle* under its various names to help unify their fel-

¹⁴⁹Joseph Johnson, "Advance in Property," *Council Bluffs Bugle*, February 5, 1856, 3.

¹⁵⁰Perry Special Collections Department, *Register of the Papers of Joseph Ellis Johnson*, 39, 48, 50, 63, 66, 68, 69, 71; Rufus Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 243-44.

¹⁵¹Johnson, *J.E.J.: Trail to Sundown*, 353-63.

¹⁵²*Ibid.*, 72, 141, 224-25, 475-76.

low Saints, sustain the goal of “gathering,” and to build Kanesville on a healthy economic foundation. They cared for their subscribers and the citizens of Kanesville, wanting them to have access to religious information, political updates, practical advice, and financial opportunities.

The end of the Mormon-influenced *Bugle* began with the introduction of one man. Lysander Babbitt (no relationship to Almon Babbitt and not a Mormon) moved to the Council Bluffs area and bought a significant amount of land from Enos Lowe in 1855.¹⁵³ Lysander subsequently bought the *Bugle* from Johnson and kept it running until 1860. His name appears for the first time next to the names of Johnson and the publisher, Mr. Carpenter (first name unknown), on the March 10, 1857, issue.¹⁵⁴ May 26, 1857, marks the last issue published with Johnson’s name under the title of the *Bugle*.¹⁵⁵ Lysander Babbitt later became mayor of Council Bluffs for a couple of terms¹⁵⁶ and served the city in both that capacity and in editing the *Bugle*, but he did not have the Mormon perspective that made the paper so unique.

The transfer of ownership marks the end of the *Bugle*’s influence on Mormons in the Kanesville area. Nearly all of the Mormons who stayed in Iowa up to this point had decided not to go west. When the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints was organized in 1860, it had strong appeals: a gospel message with the familiar sound of the Book of Mormon and a president, Joseph Smith III, who was Joseph and Emma’s son. Rather than preaching a gathering, it encouraged its members to stay in their homes and foster good relations with their neighbors. It also stepped decisively away from uncomfortable and unpopular doctrines such as polygamy, proxy ordinances for the dead, and secret temple ceremonies.¹⁵⁷

The paper retained its name as the *Council Bluffs Bugle* and re-

¹⁵³Lysander Babbitt and Enos Lowe, “Notice,” *Council Bluffs Bugle*, August 14, 1855, 2.

¹⁵⁴Positioned below and left of the masthead, *Council Bluffs Bugle*, March 10, 1857, 1.

¹⁵⁵Positioned below and left of the masthead, *Council Bluffs Bugle*, May 26, 1857, 1.

¹⁵⁶Keatley, *History of Pottawattamie County*, 106.

¹⁵⁷Barbara J. Bernauer, “Gathering the Remnants: Establishing the RLDS Church in Southwestern Iowa,” *John Whitmer Historical Association*

mained a frontier newspaper, giving advice to emigrants and spreading frontier news to the East, but it no longer had a Mormon perspective or focus.

INTO THE FRAY: SAM HOUSTON'S UTAH WAR

William P. MacKinnon

Few are the opportunities afford[ed] to men of low estate to be heard on national Questions before the Peers of the Realm & Subjects of the nation—for the privilege I have enjoyed thro my letter to Genl Houston, for once I feel partialy satisfied. —Nauvoo Legion Major Seth M. Blair to Mormon Apostle George A. Smith, June 2, 1858

The doings about the Mormons is all wrong, and will result in terrific disaster, or shame to the Nation, & perhaps both! —U.S.

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Senator Sam Houston to his wife, Margaret Lea Houston, February 26, 1858

MANY STUDENTS OF HISTORY KNOW OF Samuel (“Sam”) Houston’s noble as well as quixotic political causes: fairness for the Cherokees; independence for Texas; annexation by the United States; prosecution of the Mexican War; a post-war lust for Coahuila and Chihuahua; and a conflicted support of Texas secession combined with distaste for Jefferson Davis’s Richmond autocracy. Often missed in the traditional examination of these causes has been an understanding of Houston’s colorful involvement as a Mormon political ally during the still poorly understood Utah War of 1857–58.¹ The purpose of this article is to shed light on the wartime Houston-Mormon alliance, with focus on its origins, nature, and significance. Of necessity, intertwined with a discussion of this relationship will be some analysis of the coincident, overlapping roles of

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¹For an explanation of the Utah War’s long obscurity, see MacKinnon, “Loose in the Stacks: A Half-Century with the Utah War and Its Legacy,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 40 (Spring 2007): 48–53. Sam Houston’s role in this conflict is fully described in MacKinnon, “Turning Away That Fearful Storm’: Regulars, Volunteers, and Sam Houston Too,” a chapter in *At Sword’s Point, Part 2: A Documentary History of the Utah War, 1858 and Thereafter* (Norman, Okla.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., forthcoming); partial explanations appear in two works by Michael Scott Van Wagenen, *The Texas Republic and the Mormon Kingdom of God* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2002) and “Sam Houston and the Utah War,” *Utah Historical Quarterly* 76 (Winter 2008): 66–78.

two other Texans involved in Utah affairs of the late antebellum period: Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, the Houston enemy who commanded the U.S. Army's Utah Expedition; and Major Ben McCulloch, the former Texas Ranger, Democratic Party stalwart, U.S. marshal for the eastern district of Texas, and Houston protégé, whom President Buchanan used in multiple Utah War roles at the beginning, middle, and end of the conflict.

THE UTAH WAR: WHAT WAS IT?

Because of the Utah War's persistent obscurity, perhaps the clearest way to begin an analysis of Sam Houston's role in it is with a summary description of the conflict. In a political sense, the war was President James Buchanan's 1857 effort to replace Brigham Young, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as governor of Utah Territory and to install his successor, Alfred Cumming, with an army escort of twenty-five hundred troops. It was a change that Young resisted with guerrilla tactics, an armed confrontation that went on until a controversial but peaceful settlement was reached a year later.

The war did not simply well up soon after President Buchanan's March 4, 1857, inauguration because of a single critical incident. Instead, the confrontation was nearly ten years in the making, with Mormon-federal relations—already poor even before the 1847 Mormon arrival in the Salt Lake Valley—steadily deteriorating immediately thereafter. By Buchanan's inauguration virtually every interface between the territorial and federal governments had become a battleground.

There were conflicts over the selection and performance of mail contractors; relations with Utah's Indian tribes; matters of land ownership and the accuracy of federal surveys; financial stewardship of congressional appropriations for the territory; the administration of Utah's federal courts and criminal justice system; and, perhaps most important, the background, competence, and behavior of federal officeholders in Utah. In addition to these administrative pinch points, there were highly public, event-driven upsets over issues such as the Mormons' 1852 polygamy announcement; the uneven treatment of emigrants passing through Utah to the Pacific Coast; responsibility for a series of uninvestigated, unprosecuted murders; repeated congressional rejection of a Mormon State of Deseret; and a related controversy over whether Young was seeking Mormon independence outside the Union.

At the heart of these clashes was the disconnect implicit in con-

flicting philosophies of governance held in Salt Lake City and Washington. At odds were Young's vision of Utah as a millennially oriented theocracy operating under his autocratic leadership and the U.S. government's paternalistic view of Utah as a federal territory functioning under republican principles as a congressional ward through a federally sworn governor. What Governor Young perceived as a form of intolerable colonialism, the federal establishment viewed as the normal path to statehood established by the Northwest Ordinance of 1787.

In a military sense, the conflict was also the armed confrontation over power and authority during 1857–58 between the civil-religious leadership of Utah Territory, led by Governor Young, and the federal leadership of President James Buchanan—a contest that pitted the Mormon Nauvoo Legion, perhaps the nation's largest, most experienced territorial militia, against an expeditionary force that ultimately grew to involve almost one-third of the U.S. Army. Here was the nation's most extensive and expensive military undertaking during the period between the Mexican War and the Civil War.

Although many traditional Mormon historians and other commentators have viewed the Utah War as an act of persecution, in my view it was not a religious crusade by the federal government against Mormonism to eradicate polygamy. That focus came later—after the Civil War. Action-oriented, individual congressmen like Justin S. Morrill of Vermont, urged such a crusade in the late 1850s, but a lawyerly James Buchanan did not. As I see it, neither was it a campaign to suppress a Mormon “rebellion,” a term that Buchanan used sparingly, although at the point in the fall of 1857 when Governor Young declared martial law, forbade free travel within and across Utah, and issued orders to kill U.S. Army officers and their mountaineer guides, it becomes more difficult for me and others to avoid using the “R” word.²

**“ASKED ME AN HUNDRED QUESTIONS”:
DEALINGS WITH HOUSTON, 1844–56**

Sam Houston's long relationship with leaders of the LDS

²This summary is adapted from MacKinnon, “Full of Courage”: Thomas L. Kane, the Utah War, and BYU's Kane Collection as Lodestone,” in David J. Whittaker, ed., *Colonel Thomas L. Kane and the Mormons, 1846–1883* (Provo, Utah: BYU Studies/Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2010), 89–119.

Church—most of whom he never met—sprang from an intricate 1844 plan by which Apostle Lyman Wight, President Joseph Smith, and Lucien Woodworth of the newly created Mormon Council of Fifty petitioned Houston, then president of the Republic of Texas, to establish the Kingdom of God on that country's southern and western borders to serve as, among other things, a military buffer against both Mexico and Comancheria. Houston was sympathetic to the possibility of such an arrangement and was probably aware that, in Smith's 1844 bid for the U.S. presidency, his campaign platform called for the American annexation of Texas. But the Texas colonization plan died with Joseph Smith's assassination in June 1844 and the subsequent decision by Brigham Young, Smith's successor, for a mass exodus from Illinois to the Rockies rather than in a southwesterly direction. Nonetheless Lyman Wight remained in Texas and established several small Mormon colonies in the young republic, thrusts that stimulated Wight's separatist urges and eventually contributed to his excommunication.³

From these interactions, Houston developed an interest in the Mormon cause strengthened by his identification with underdogs and his own anti-establishment urges. Although he had never met Houston (and never would), Brigham Young warmed to these proclivities and to the senator's blunt, straightforward leadership style as well as his keen interest in Indian affairs. At one critical juncture in his joustings with the U.S. Army, Young asserted: "There is one man in the Senate of the United States who, I think, agrees with me, if there is nobody else, and that one is Genl. Samuel Houston. He has had experience, and has good sense."⁴

By the summer of 1856, with the Atlantic coast awash in anti-Mormon sentiment, the Church made a high-level approach to Houston that went far beyond the routine contacts initiated by Utah's territorial delegate in Congress, Dr. John M. Bernhisel, from his nonvoting seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. On the evening of July 22, 1856, slightly more than a month after the new Republican Party

³Van Wagenen, *The Texas Republic and the Mormon Kingdom of God*, 23–63; see also Melvin C. Johnson, *Polygamy on the Pedernales: Lyman Wight's Mormon Villages in Antebellum Texas, 1845–1858* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2006).

⁴"Remarks by President Brigham Young, Bowery, Provo, June 27, 1858," *Deseret News*, July 14, 1858, 86/4.

adopted an antipolygamy plank for its first national platform, Apostle George A. Smith met with Houston in Washington to assess congressional attitudes. Smith had recently arrived in the capital as emissary of a constitutional convention that had met in Salt Lake City during March to petition Congress for recognition of Utah Territory as the State of Deseret.⁵

There are two accounts of this Smith-Houston meeting, both provided by Mormons. One version was contained in Smith's report to Brigham Young. This document presents a straightforward account of a discussion at an unspecified location that touched on a wide range of political issues, including no doubt the intense anti-Mormon sentiments in Congress as well as the related tactical issue of when to present Utah's statehood petition. Also reported were Houston's highly personal questions about Governor Young, a man who clearly fascinated the senator.

The second account differs from Smith's report in many respects. It is a third-hand description of an 1856 Smith-Houston meeting in Bernhisel's Washington hotel room recorded in 1929 by George Henry Crosby Jr., a Mormon bishop, lawyer, and newspaperman. In Crosby's account, reported when he was fifty-seven and recounting the story as he heard it from a nineteenth-century Texas congressman whose name he had forgotten, the meeting took on a highly informal, almost comedic flavor. Both accounts agree that the meeting lasted ninety minutes.

These descriptions of an early attempt to establish a relationship between Houston and a senior Mormon official at a time of substantial volatility in Mormon-federal relations serve as context for the Utah War involvements soon to follow. Smith's report is clearly definitive because of its contemporary and first-hand character. Perhaps the principal value of Crosby's narrative—given its distance from both the event and the principals involved—lies in its anecdotal yet still credible flavor. Crosby's account also illustrates the historiographical challenges associated with evaluating recollections involving such

⁵MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part I: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858* (Norman, Okla.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 2008), 55. One of the best accounts of Smith's 1856 mission to Washington comes from his roommate in a Pennsylvania Avenue boarding house, Joseph Leland Heywood, U.S. marshal for Utah and bishop of Nephi. Unfortunately Heywood's journal does not comment on the Smith-Houston meeting.

mythic western figures as Sam Houston, if not George A. Smith and Brigham Young.

George A. Smith's Report to Brigham Young

I have written you any particular that I thought important to communicate by this mail.⁶ I have continued to make the acquaintance of members of Congress and ascertain what could be done in relation to our admission [as a state]. I have never conversed with the first man of any party who dare face the music or at least expressed himself willing to do so or favor our admission.

I had a long conversation with Genl. Houston of Texas last evening. He seemed very friendly asked me an hundred questions. I gave him a detail of your policy with the Indians which seemed to please him much. He said he thought he should carry Texas for [former President Millard] Fillmore and he thinks Fillmore's prospects [as American or Know-Nothing Party presidential candidate] were gaining ground.⁷

He is down upon [President Franklin] Peirce [sic] and [U.S. Senator Stephen A.] Douglas—says the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise [by the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act] was Treason. He is going to make a speech & *scathe* them severely. He was the only Jackson Democrat left. He said the Women has questioned him to know whether he would vote for the admission [to the Union] of Utah. He inquired particularly of your height size looks nightdress &c & particularly after your wives & children intellect unity and Phrenological developments of the Youngs &c.⁸

Brother Heywood & myself were an hour & a half in his com-

⁶George A. Smith (Washington, D.C.) to Brigham Young (Salt Lake City), July 23, 1856, LDS Church History Library.

⁷In July 1856, at about the time of this meeting, Houston wrote a long letter to John Hancock of Austin, Texas, setting forth his reasons for supporting Fillmore's candidacy and opposing that of Buchanan, the Democrat candidate, and Fremont, the Republican candidate. This letter was published as a four-page pamphlet.

⁸Houston's questions reflected his interest in the contemporary pseudo-science of phrenology, through which a person's character and personality could supposedly be determined by measuring and charting cranial features, a subject in which Young also took an interest. The question about children and their intellect may have sprung from the then-rampant, non-Mormon fascination with plural marriage and speculation that polygamous unions produced abnormal children.

pany.⁹ He seemed to enjoy himself much. Five minutes is a great while for a Congressman to talk with anybody. When we left he invited us to come again.

He told us many incidents of his past Hystery [sic] & expressed great concern at the unsettled state of the Country. He denounced Peirce[,] Douglas and School as demagogues. He hoped Fillmore could be elected [in November 1856] for he was an honest man.¹⁰

He spoke in the strongest terms in relation to the policy of the U.S. towards the Indians.

He is going to incorporate it into his contemplated speech. . . .

I shall receive with the greatest pleasure any advise [sic] from you in relation to my present mission, praying that the blessings of Heaven may rest upon you.

George Henry Crosby's Narrative

This is a story of the life and time of George A. Smith, counselor to President Brigham Young as I was told it in Texas in the summer of 1887.¹¹ I am George H. Crosby, Jr., now a resident of Evanston, Wyoming.

Sam Houston who was President of the Texas Republic, United States Senator from Texas and Governor of Texas at the outbreak of the Civil War, was [during the Pierce administration] . . . the most influential man in Congress and a loyal friend to the west. At that time John M. Bernhisel was delegate to Congress from Utah. He was a well learned man but stiff and formal and didn't sway much influence in that position. Some legislation came up that was affecting the territories in general and Utah in particular and Dr. Bernhisel was unable to control the matter, so George A. Smith was sent to Washington by President Brigham Young to look after the matter.¹²

When he got there instead of going to the hotel and taking a room

⁹Crosby's later narrative did not mention Joseph L. Heywood's presence.

¹⁰Houston's comments about Millard Fillmore probably resonated positively with Smith and Young. They had met Fremont during his earlier explorations in Utah but knew nothing about Buchanan. Because of Fillmore's help during the summer of 1850, both in establishing Utah Territory and in appointing a largely Mormon first slate of federal officials, the Latter-day Saints named Utah's first capital and a county in his honor.

¹¹George Henry Crosby Jr., Narrative, October 14, 1929, Crosby Papers, typescript, LDS Church History Library. Crosby would have been fifteen in 1887.

¹²Crosby's view of Bernhisel's effectiveness is too harsh. Although in

he went to stay with Dr. Bernhisel and slept in the same bed as the doctor.¹³ He woke up the morning after he got there and said: "Dr. Bernhisel: I am very tired after my trip across the continent on the stage coach and on the train (which then had no sleeping car berths) and I wish you would ask General Houston to come up here to see me."¹⁴

Dr. Bernhisel said he would and President Smith turned over and went to sleep again. That evening Dr. Bernhisel came to the room and announced that General Houston was waiting outside. President Smith was laying on the floor with a chair turned over [with] a pillow on it, shoes and collar not on and he was reading the evening newspaper. He sat up and said: "Tell him to come in." Dr. Bernhisel looked around and said: "Brother Smith, shouldn't we clean up some here?" But President Smith said: "Tell him to come in, tell him to come in." And so General Houston came in.¹⁵

Dr. Bernhisel prepared for quite an elaborate introduction, but President Smith reached his hand up and said: "General Houston, I am George A. Smith of Utah and I want about an hour and a half of your time."—"I am Sam Houston of Texas, I am glad to meet you, I have heard a great deal of you and you may have the hour and one half of time. I know what you have come for and I am glad to take it up with you." The two old men¹⁶ then layed down on the floor with a pillow under their heads and laid on the back of chairs and went on talking. Dr. Bernhisel sat down on the outside and made interruptions now

a very controversial position, Bernhisel was widely respected in the U.S. House of Representatives; he balanced carefully his need to act judiciously in public while dealing privately with often provocative, long-distance demands for action by Brigham Young. The fact that Bernhisel did not then practice plural marriage helped his acceptance in Washington.

¹³Joseph L. Heywood's journal indicates that, during the summer of 1856, he and George A. Smith roomed together in a Pennsylvania Avenue boardinghouse. Because of a paucity of accommodations or a need to economize, it was not unusual for travelers in antebellum America to share a bed, as Abraham Lincoln did as a young lawyer. In the cramped barracks of the frontier army, such sleeping arrangements led to the term "bunkie."

¹⁴Smith's July 23, 1856, letter to Young indicates, of course, that he had called on Houston, not vice versa.

¹⁵The puckish behavior that Crosby attributes to Apostle Smith was consistent with a number of anecdotes about Smith's sense of humor. He often removed his toupé, false teeth, and spectacles for effect, performances that prompted Indians in southern Utah to dub him "Man-Who-Comes-Apart."

¹⁶Smith and Houston were then thirty-nine and sixty-three respectively.

and then but the two went on talking the matter over and figured out what could be done.

Within ten days the matter was wound up and President Smith was ready to go on to New York.

I got this story from a former member of Congress whom I met in Texas in 1887. I cannot remember his name without referring to Blaine's "Twenty Years of Congress," but I made a trip to Texas and he and I rode out eight miles to a cattle ranch [near] Rock Springs and he told me the story about George A. Smith and said that Brigham Young was the greatest colonizer that America ever had. I have always kept the story in mind but have never done anything about putting it into record before. . . .¹⁷

I would like also to add that Sam Houston used to wear a Navajo blanket over his shoulders and sit and whittle right in the United States Senate.¹⁸ After General Houston and President Smith had been talking a little while President Smith became cold and asked Dr. Bernhisel to throw a coat over his shoulders, whereupon General Houston got a parcel which he had and took a Navajo blanket out of the parcel and put it over his shoulders and they again went on talking.¹⁹

Understand that at this time Texas and California were the only far western states that had been admitted to the Union and that it was the Democratic administration and help for the territory had to come through a democratic source. General Houston was always a great friend to the west and remained a friend to the Mormon people up to the time of his [1863] death, soon after the Civil war broke out.

¹⁷It is not clear to whom Crosby refers here. James G. Blaine of Maine, former speaker of the house, had written *Twenty Years of Congress, From Lincoln to Garfield with a Review of the Events Which Led to the Political Revolution of 1860*, 2 vols. (Norwich, Conn.: Henry Bill Publishing, 1886).

¹⁸Houston's famous Indian blanket, a remembrance of his legendary, hermetic years with the tribes in Tennessee, was Cherokee, not Navajo. Except for this eccentric touch, and occasionally wearing a white beaver hat and Texas jaguar skin vest, he dressed as a gentleman but did indeed whittle while seated at his senate desk. For a charming description of Houston's appearance, attire, and whittling, see Virginia Clay-Clopton and Ada Sterling, eds., *A Belle of the Fifties: Memoirs of Mrs. Clay, of Alabama, Covering Social and Political Life in Washington and the South, 1853-66* (New York: Doubleday, Page, & Company, 1905).

¹⁹That Smith would need a blanket in Washington's steamy July heat is unlikely.

“WITHOUT MORAL COURAGE”: HOUSTON-JOHNSTON ENMITY

Paralleling the development of these pre-war Mormon-Houston ties was the growth of an unrelated but subsequently important enmity between Sam Houston and Albert Sidney Johnston. This tension arose from multiple incidents in Texas during the pre-annexation period and thereafter. The first clash took place after Houston had left the presidency and while Johnston, a former commander of Texas's army, was serving as the republic's secretary of war. At issue was the prosecution of a war against the Cherokees, an especially sensitive subject for Houston since, years earlier, during a period of personal turbulence, he had lived as a member of the tribe for a prolonged period. Of this incident, Charles P. Roland, Johnston's most recent biographer, commented, "Outwardly Johnston and Houston remained cordial; inwardly they smoldered with distaste for each other." In his 1878 biography, Johnston's son commented: "Although forgiving of injuries; [Albert S. Johnston] was resentful of insult" and the conflict with Houston "probably rankled in the breast of the other party [Houston], as afterward appeared." The second conflict occurred during Houston's second presidential administration, when Johnston's role was again that of a Texas general officer. The issue was the equally volatile matter of military relations with Mexico. Of this friction, Johnston's biographer commented, "The fire between the two abated, but it would not die." In both conflicts, Johnston, who had been seriously wounded in a duel in 1837, came close to challenging Houston over perceived insults.²⁰

The enmity carried on into the Mexican War and the Civil War. During the first conflict, Senator Houston blocked Johnston's attempt to obtain a commission in the regular U.S. Army; and as a consequence, Johnston's service was limited to the command of Texas volunteer troops. Even after Johnston's 1862 death at Shiloh as a Confederate general, Houston wrote to a friend:

You know that I told you when Johnston was assigned the com-

²⁰Charles P. Roland, *Albert Sidney Johnston: Soldier of Three Republics* (1964; rpt. ed., Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 94, 112–15; William Preston Johnston, *The Life of Albert Sidney Johnston: Embracing His Services in the Armies of the United States, the Republic of Texas, and the Confederate States* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1878), 121. Johnston's 1837 duel had been with General Felix Huston, an officer unrelated to Sam Houston.

mand of Kentucky and Tennessee that both states would be lost to the confederacy [as they were]. Johnston was a good man and a gentleman, but [had] not one particle of military capacity, and for statesmanship he did not comprehend it. . . . I do not reflect upon poor Johnston. I only reflect upon the man [Jefferson Davis] who showed a want of judgment in ever placing him in a situation he was not fit for. The poor fellow gave up his life. It was all he could do. He was a man of physical courage but without moral courage.²¹

Emblematic of the longstanding Houston-Johnston enmity is the title of a 2009 documentary study of ninety-four letters written to Johnston during 1838–61: *The Texas That Might Have Been: Sam Houston's Foes Write to Albert Sidney Johnston*.²² The mutual hatred involving these two men was not unusual for mid-nineteenth-century America, beset as it was by intense sectional, political, and religious conflict, as well as by an exaggerated sense of personal honor. In its most violent form, the latter played out through the code duello. As discussed above, one such "meeting" had already left Johnston with a permanent limp. In Sam Houston's case, by the time of the Utah War, his reputation was freighted not only by a penchant for colorful attire but also by the public's awareness that he had reacted brutally to perceived insults by killing several men.

Such behavior had significant negative consequences far beyond matters of individual reputation, fraying, as it did, the very fabric of societal civility while the nation slid toward the bloodbath of disunion. Thus, Winfield Scott, the general in chief, felt free to engage in a vitriolic correspondence with then Secretary of War Jefferson Davis while unilaterally moving the army's headquarters from

²¹Houston, Letter to Eber Worthing Cave, February 3, 1863, in Madge Thornall Roberts, ed., *The Personal Correspondence of Sam Houston*, 4 vols. (Denton: University of North Texas, 2001) 4:418–19.

²²Virtually none of this material dealt with the Utah conflict except for one post-war letter that quoted Ben McCulloch's comment on Johnston: "As [a result of] close observation in Utah, he believed that you was the best man that could have been sent there, and that he [would] yield to you in everything in the line of duty as you had nobly performed it." James Love, Letter to Albert Sidney Johnston, June 11, 1860, in Margaret Swett Henson, comp., and Donald E. Willett, ed., *The Texas That Might Have Been: Sam Houston's Foes Write to Albert Sidney Johnston* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 244–45.

Washington to New York, a location in which he would later be lamentably isolated from decisions relating to the launch and conduct of the Utah Expedition. Scott was also in decades-long conflict with the expedition's initial commander, Brevet Brigadier General William S. Harney, a subordinate whom the army had felt compelled to court-martial four times by 1857 for various disciplinary infractions while a civilian court had tried (and acquitted) him for bludgeoning a defenseless female slave to death. By the onset of the Utah War, Harney was in conflict with Utah's Governor-designate Cumming over tribal issues involving Cumming's earlier assignment as superintendent of the Upper Missouri's Indian agency. When Albert Sidney Johnston succeeded Harney, he, in turn, developed his own enmity with Cumming over a variety of petty matters of protocol and procedure. In March 1858, the Johnston-Cumming conflict as well as Thomas L. Kane's hyper-sensitivity, needlessly poisoned Kane's own relationship with Johnston at Camp Scott, driving Kane to the extreme of challenging Johnston to a duel in the snow. Johnston was able to deflect this challenge in a way that preserved Kane's honor as well as his own, but the incident had destructive consequences that rippled through federal-Mormon relations for years. If Albert Sidney Johnston and Sam Houston were enemies, then by the logic of the times, it would strengthen the rapport of Brigham Young and Houston, although the two leaders would never meet. Small wonder that, in this atmosphere, John Brown and his sons hacked to death five defenseless men in the "Bleeding Kansas" of 1856 or that, three years later, they attempted to trigger a regional slave revolt with a bloody assault on the U.S. arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia.

"TO MURDER AN INNOCENT AND LAW-ABIDING PEOPLE":

MAJOR BLAIR'S 1857 OUTREACH

In late November 1857, at a critical juncture in the Utah War, Brigham Young reached out to Sam Houston, the most prominent of the non-Mormons who would be of service to the Church during its armed confrontation with the U.S. government.²³ Young surely knew that the senator was a former supporter of Joseph Smith's Texas colonizing scheme. It is possible that he also understood and exploited to

²³Unaware of the Houston-Mormon relationship, most Latter-day Saints would probably identify Thomas L. Kane, a low-profile Philadelphia lawyer-philanthropist, as the Church's most helpful non-Mormon ally dur-

Mormon advantage the two Houston sensitivities discussed above: his longstanding enmity with Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston, and the senator's more recent political tensions with James Buchanan during the presidential campaign of 1856. During 1857–58, there was little awareness of these Houston-Mormon linkages other than at the very top of the LDS Church.

The intermediary through whom the Latter-day Saints approached Houston was Seth Millington Blair, a major in the Nauvoo Legion. Although Blair had been born in 1819 in Tennessee, the state to which Houston migrated from Virginia, it was in Texas as well as in Utah where the most colorful chapters of Blair's life unfolded. How and precisely when Blair first met Sam Houston is unclear, but they had been comrades-in-arms during the Texas revolution and probably had other contacts during Blair's subsequent service as a Texas Ranger. John Bond, a Blair descendant, believes that his ancestor may have met both Houston and Albert Sidney Johnston in 1839 when all three men, together with Seth Blair's long-time friend Ben McCulloch, were in San Felipe, Texas.

After joining the LDS Church in 1849, Blair migrated to the Mormon way-station of Council Bluffs (Kanesville), Iowa, and then came on to the Salt Lake Valley in 1850. He soon became not only a Nauvoo Legion militia officer but the professional peer of Utah's leading Mormon attorneys. When Congress established Utah Territory in September 1850, Houston voluntarily advocated Blair's appointment as its first U.S. attorney. Blair served in this position until 1854. His letters to Houston give the flavor of a relationship that was close and mutually respectful rather than intimate. In 1854–55 Blair returned to Texas as a missionary and vigorously defended his controversial church and its leaders in the local newspapers.²⁴

In the fall of 1857, Blair turned from the law to his militia responsibilities with an active Utah War assignment as a major of cavalry, scouting against the approaching army in what is now southwestern Wyoming. In late November, after prolonged suffering from a respira-

ing the Utah War.

²⁴The best summary of Blair's life is in the unpublished research of John Bond of Roy, Utah, Blair's great-great-grandson. Bond, Letter to MacKinnon, September 28, 2000, and accompanying materials. For a description of Blair's LDS mission in Texas, see Seth Blair (Port Sullivan, Texas), Letter to Brigham Young, January 7, 1855, LDS Church History Library.

tory ailment, Blair returned to Salt Lake City on leave, contemplated the potential usefulness of his long relationship with Sam Houston and their mutual antipathy toward Albert Sidney Johnson, and decided to resume his correspondence with the senator. Significantly, in early September, Brigham Young had urged Mormon agents Horace S. Eldredge (St. Louis), Jeter Clinton (Philadelphia), and William I. Appleby (New York) to gather intelligence in Washington by discreetly selecting a reliable (“true”) agent knowledgeable about governmental deliberations and able to influence them.²⁵ Blair’s decision to open a correspondence with Houston two months later was consistent with Young’s intent and may even have been stimulated by it.

On November 24, with the pressures of the Utah War upon him and the departure of the monthly California mail imminent, Blair drafted a long letter to Houston.²⁶ In Blair’s account, the idea of seeking the senator’s help was his, but it is clear that the most senior Mormon leaders were also involved in at least a review of what Blair drafted, if not a more active role. The letter set forth a prolix litany of Mormon grievances against the U.S. government and outlined a prospective scorched-earth policy best described as apocalyptic. In terms of its raw emotion and ferocity, Blair’s letter stands out among a substantial body of overheated Utah War documents generated on both sides of the conflict. After circulating his draft for comment by Apostles George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff, Blair shortened it at Smith’s suggestion. Given the circumstances and Brigham Young’s penchant for micromanaging, it is difficult to believe that he, too, was not actively involved in the final shape that Blair’s letter took. The major’s final draft, dated December 1, 1857, went east by way of the indirect but relatively reliable and snow-free route of Salt Lake City-San Bernardino-Panama.²⁷

How did Seth Blair “fit” within the LDS leadership hierarchy? He was obviously respected, diligent, and professionally competent,

²⁵MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 1*, 278–81.

²⁶At this point, neither Blair nor his Church’s most senior leaders in Salt Lake City would have known whether Johnston’s Utah Expedition intended to go into winter quarters at Fort Bridger or push west in an attempt to force their way through the snow-clogged passes into the Salt Lake Valley. Because of the weather and his massive loss of draft animals earlier in the month, Johnston chose to spend the winter at Bridger.

²⁷For the chain of events associated with drafting this letter, see Seth

but he did not hold a senior position in the hierarchy (what today would be called a General Authority) or a regionally prominent position as a stake president, mission president, or bishop. Blair's militia rank was probably a good reflector of his relative standing in Utah's civil and religious communities.

There are telltale signs that Brigham Young viewed Blair ambivalently, and that he was inclined to use Blair more as an agent or instrument of his own will than as a highly valued advisor. Michael Van Wagenen, analyzing Blair's letter to George A. Smith in June 1858, somehow concludes that, as early as 1850 Brigham Young intentionally denied Blair high status in the Church's hierarchy in order to lower his profile and enhance his usefulness as an agent by giving him an appearance of independence.²⁸ I believe that a more accurate and less positive reflection of the relationship between the two men is found in their January 1857 interactions over what was to become the B.Y.X. Carrying Company. This Mormon organization was formed by Blair, Hiram Kimball, and Elijah Thomas to assume the federal mail contract on the Independence-Salt Lake mail route in the wake of a non-Mormon contractor's exit from the mail business. After Blair covertly ceded his two-thirds control over the contract to Young for the Church's benefit while continuing as a "front" for its interface with the U.S. post office department, Young confided to George A. Smith, "The mail you know has hitherto not had the metal and energy of Mormon boys to push it through. Whether Hyrum Kimball & Co., the new contractors, will be able to start it, I know not. Seth M. Blair and Elijah Thomas are partners, I am informed, and you know their metal is light."²⁹

Blair, however, was one of the few Texans Young had available, and his unique connection to Houston was fortuitous at a crucial time. It may well be that Seth Blair sensed his middling status and

M. Blair, Journal, and Seth Blair, Letter to George A. Smith, June 2, 1858, both in the LDS Church History Library.

²⁸Van Wagenen, "Sam Houston and the Utah War," 71–72.

²⁹Brigham Young, Letter to George A. Smith, January 26, 1857, Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (chronological scrapbook of typed entries and newspaper clippings, 1830–present), LDS Church History Library, courtesy of John Bond. Bond concludes: "Brigham used the term 'metal is light' to mean Seth didn't have what it took to make it work." John Bond, email to MacKinnon, September 28, 2000.

tried mightily to rise in his prophet's esteem. During 1858, as well as later in life, Blair took great pride in the letter that he sent with the encouragement of at least George A. Smith and Wilford Woodruff on December 1, 1857, in an attempt to influence Senator Houston's behavior.³⁰ The result, which reached Houston in Washington in February 1858, was probably more than either Seth Blair or his apostolic advisors anticipated, with Houston indeed attempting to moderate the administration's Mormon policy as no one else in Washington chose to do. Blair's letter had its desired impact just as Congress was considering Buchanan's request to expand the army to reinforce the Utah Expedition.

"THE LIBERTY OF ADDRESSING YOU": BLAIR'S LETTER

Relevant excerpts from the lengthy letter read:

Once again, and probably for the last time, I take the liberty of addressing you.³¹ Early in life I became, like thousands of others, your devoted friend . . . from the impulse of the moment that I admired in you that which my inner senses taught me was noble—a man, a chief

³⁰Finding the complete text of this document has been a challenge. The original letter has not appeared in any of the known collections of Houston's papers. Blair did not make a retained copy and later sought one from George A. Smith. Blair, Letter to George A. Smith, June 2, 1858. Smith had had the Church Historian's Office make a letterpress copy before mailing. Because of errors or haste in the copying process, though, significant portions of the letter were damaged. Accordingly, the definitive text is "The Mormon Question. Interesting Letter from Great Salt Lake to Gen. Sam Houston," *New York Herald*, March 2, 1858, 1/4–5, which was a copy of the original which Houston permitted the newspaper's Washington correspondent to make and telegraph to New York. From the *Herald's* text, some or all of Blair's long letter spread to other newspapers. See for example the version in the Mormon-affiliated paper the *Oracle* (Crescent City, Iowa), March 26, 1858, 3/1–3, Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Library.

³¹Seth Blair (Salt Lake City), Letter to Sam Houston (Washington, D.C.), December 1, 1857, *New York Herald*, March 2, 1858, 1/4–5. This letter was neither the first nor the last time that Blair wrote to Houston. In 1850 he had written to Houston to introduce Apostle John Taylor; and in 1853, with his term as U.S. attorney for Utah expiring, Blair had unsuccessfully sought appointment as Utah's chief justice through Houston. Seth Blair, Letters to Sam Houston, February 17, 1850, October 30, 1853, LDS Church

tain, a patriot, statesman and soldier . . . which characteristics I yet hope are ripening in you, to come forth in radiant splendor when an honest man shall be acknowledged the noblest work of God.³²

I am induced to write you at this time from the peculiar circumstances that I find myself surrounded with, in common with the citizens of my unhappy country, and especially of the citizens of Utah; for in my heart I believe you the only Senator who sits in the Congress of the United States who dares to lift up his voice in opposition to public opinion, and I write to inform you most truly the feelings of the citizens of Utah. . . . Under these impressions we labor and live, and for months we have been preparing for the worst, with an invading army on our frontier. . . .

You no doubt ask, then, in your mind, what the issue will be. I will candidly answer you; it cannot be worse than to tamely submit to the illegal, unconstitutional and despotic course marked out by the administration against us. You ask then, have we a hope of withstanding the force of the most powerful nation on earth, with a handful of men? If the swamps of Florida have produced a Billy Bowlegs, whom the nation has fought for twenty-five years unsuccessfully,³³ then will not the fastnesses of the Rocky Mountains, whose inhabitants are driven to self defence, existing a thousand miles over large plains from navigation and from all supplies of their persecutors, produce captains equally hard to defeat, when they will only act on the defense, and on the improved system of guerilla [sic] warfare.³⁴ How improved? Ask the United States officers what they found at Fort Bridger? The same they found at Fort Supply. Query. What did they

History Library; copy in my possession courtesy of John Bond. On January 15, 1859, Blair would again seek Houston's help to remove the army's Utah Expedition from the territory.

³²Here Blair may have been quoting from "The Cotter's Saturday Night" by Robert Burns, one of Houston's favorite poets. The rest of Blair's characterization of Houston presaged the inscription on the latter's grave marker: "A Brave Soldier. A Fearless Statesman. / A Great Orator—A Pure Patriot. / A Faithful Friend, A Loyal Citizen. / A Devoted Husband and Father. / A Consistent Christian—An Honest Man." Van Wagenen, "Sam Houston and the Utah War," 78.

³³This reference alludes to the great unconquered Seminole chief against whom the Fifth U.S. Infantry fought inconclusively in Florida during the Third Seminole War until being transferred to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas Territory, in 1857 for the Utah War.

³⁴Independent of Blair, U.S. Army Captain P.G.T. Beauregard wrote privately from New Orleans to Senator John Slidell to provide gratuitous

find at those thriving settlements on their arrival? Blackened desolation; ashes alone remained . . . and as Forts Bridger and Supply have gone, so will each city, town, hamlet, village, settlement, habitation, field, altar, temple, all and every trace of civilization in these mountains go at the approach of the invading army. This is true, mark it well; as I tell you so have we determined to do.³⁵ . . .

Our numbers, you ask, what are they? Enough! Our resources, true patriotism, which asks no reward save equal rights. Our hope, victory or death. You, no doubt, feel this a suicidal course for us to pursue. What other is left us? We believe the administration are not authorized by the national Congress to take this step.³⁶ . . .

Ever desiring peace, we have abstained from shedding the blood of these troops,³⁷ and only taken that precaution to retard their progress that would afford the nation time to consider the rash act of the President, and give us also ample time to complete that assurance with which [U.S. Army] Capt. [Stewart] Van Vliet was charged to [deliver to] his excellency James Buchanan by Governor Brigham Young; namely, that the people would resist the suicidal course that has been adopted towards Utah by the administration, at the suggestions of such demagogues [sic] as S.A. Douglas and others.³⁸ Had not these feelings yet warmed and animated Governor Young and this people,

military advice about the campaign that raised apprehensions in terms similar to Blair's about a "great captain" arising from the midst of Young's Mormon troops. P.G.T. Beauregard, Letter to John Slidell, February 9, 1858, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

³⁵A reference to the Nauvoo Legion's destruction by fire in early October 1857 of the civilian trading post, Fort Bridger, 113 miles northeast of Salt Lake City. At the same time, the legion also fired Fort Supply, the Mormon agricultural settlement, Indian mission, and emigration way-station thirteen miles south of Fort Bridger. Since these two posts were virtually the only significant settlements between Fort Laramie and Salt Lake City, their destruction was highly dramatic and well-known throughout the nation.

³⁶As Blair wrote, Congress had been in recess since early March 1857 and had played no role in the initiation and prosecution of the war. After Congress reconvened in early December, it became evident that this noninvolvement was a sore point among Houston's fellow senators.

³⁷For a discussion of the Utah War's early bloodshed and Brigham Young's authorization of lethal force, see MacKinnon, *At Sword's Point, Part I*, 295–328.

³⁸Another of Blair's multiple references to Senator Douglas's offensive speech, delivered on June 12, 1857, in Springfield, Illinois, in which he

let me assure you that not one of Johnston's command would now live to leech the public treasury or profane the name of that God who gave victory to the American arms; for with 100 Texan rangers, which we have,³⁹ not only their baggage wagons would have been burned months ago, but even their tents consumed over their heads, while the revolver would have done the execution that those entrusted with stampeding animals failed to accomplish; and without our shedding a drop of their blood they would now have been food for the wolves and vultures of the plains.⁴⁰

Time will prove these facts. . . . These facts I have truly stated, and ask what course will be taken with Utah. Will the administration send out a sufficient force to awe or whip the Mormons[?] . . . If so, how many soldiers shall be levied for the war, or what number of volunteers shall be sustained? . . . not less than 45,000 or 50,000, I presume, which will drain the treasury and accomplish but one object—the dissolution of the Union and eternal infamy and disgrace on the American arms.⁴¹ . . .

I have observed and do not believe a compromise of our present

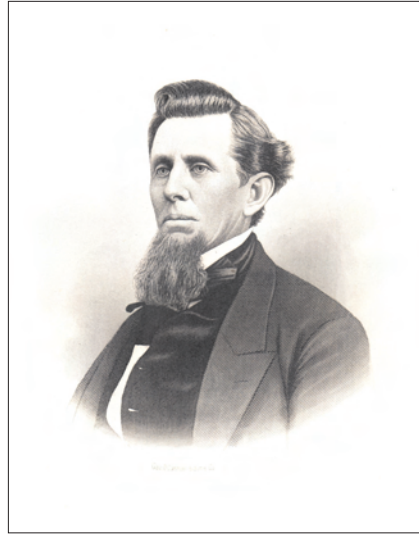
urged taking a hard line in dealing with the Mormons. One of his recommendations was repealing the organic act that created Utah and placing it under draconian federal control.

³⁹Blair may have been the only former Texas Ranger then in Utah. This exaggeration was clearly intended for Houston's benefit as well as perhaps that of Ben McCulloch, his frequent companion in Washington and a former Texas Ranger, who was also a Blair friend. Blair's persistent use of the title "governor" for Young was consistent with the Mormon refusal to recognize Alfred Cumming as Utah's new chief executive, although the position of Cumming and the U.S. government was that the change had occurred legally at Fort Bridger on November 21, 1857, when Cumming took the oath of office from a federal judge under army protection.

⁴⁰Simultaneous with its destruction of Forts Bridger and Supply, the Nauvoo Legion fell upon three unguarded army supply trains and burned seventy-six wagons containing approximately \$1 million of irreplaceable materiel. These unanticipated acts were the cause of both embarrassment and alarm in Washington, resulting in treason indictments against Brigham Young and most of Utah's other leaders.

⁴¹Blair plays on the growing congressional fear of the Utah Expedition as a financial drain of unprecedented proportions at a time of national economic distress; the Panic of 1857 had begun during the fall. In Buchanan's first annual message to a newly convened Congress, delivered December 8, 1857—a week after Blair wrote—the president called for an in-

Lawyer Seth M. Blair (1819–75), a major in the Nauvoo Legion during the Utah War and Brigham Young’s Texas-connected link to U.S. Senator Sam Houston and his protégé, Ben McCulloch. Blair’s letter to Houston in December 1857 resulted in Houston’s watershed speech in the Senate in February 1858 on the Utah War. Lithograph from Whitney’s 1892 History of Utah.



difficulties will be effected. Why? First, from the fact that the spirit of patriotism that ever has prompted Congress to take such a course has ceased to inspire the hearts of its members. Second, our cause is despised and thought not worth the pains of the press. . . . [I]t was, is and has been the fixed determination of political demagogues to exterminate us as a people; and, further, I am prepared to satisfy any honorable gentleman’s mind that the federal officers in Utah have been influenced to leave here for a political purpose each time by the same clique, and to raise the hue and cry of wolf, wolf, abomination, treason, Joe Smith, Brigham Young and the devil, all to prepare the minds of the people for the present crisis.⁴²

I beseech you, then, as one who loves the Union and who despises the life that would tamely submit to a tyrannical rule, to raise your voice to stop the bigoted crusade of the administration against Governor Young and this people, and ask Congress to countermand the ex-

crease in the army of four regiments (about 20 percent) to prosecute the war, although his military advisers urged a far greater expansion, even a doubling of the army’s size.

⁴²In April 1857, virtually all of the non-Mormon federal appointees fled from Utah as their predecessors had done in 1851. Similarly, they accused Brigham Young of disloyalty, usurpation of federal law, and stimulating out-of-control violence. MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point, Part 1*, 99–137; Thomas G. Alexander, “Carpetbaggers, Reprobates, and Liars: Federal Judges and the Utah War (1857–58),” *The Historian* 70 (Summer 2008): 209–38.



Albert Sidney Johnston (1803–62), the Utah Expedition's commander, uniformed as a brevet brigadier general, the rank to which he was promoted for his effective leadership of the army's desperate march to Fort Bridger in November 1857. Engraved etching published in 1896 by New York artist Jacques Reich from his pen-and-ink sketch, probably after a contemporary photo. Courtesy Yale Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Library.

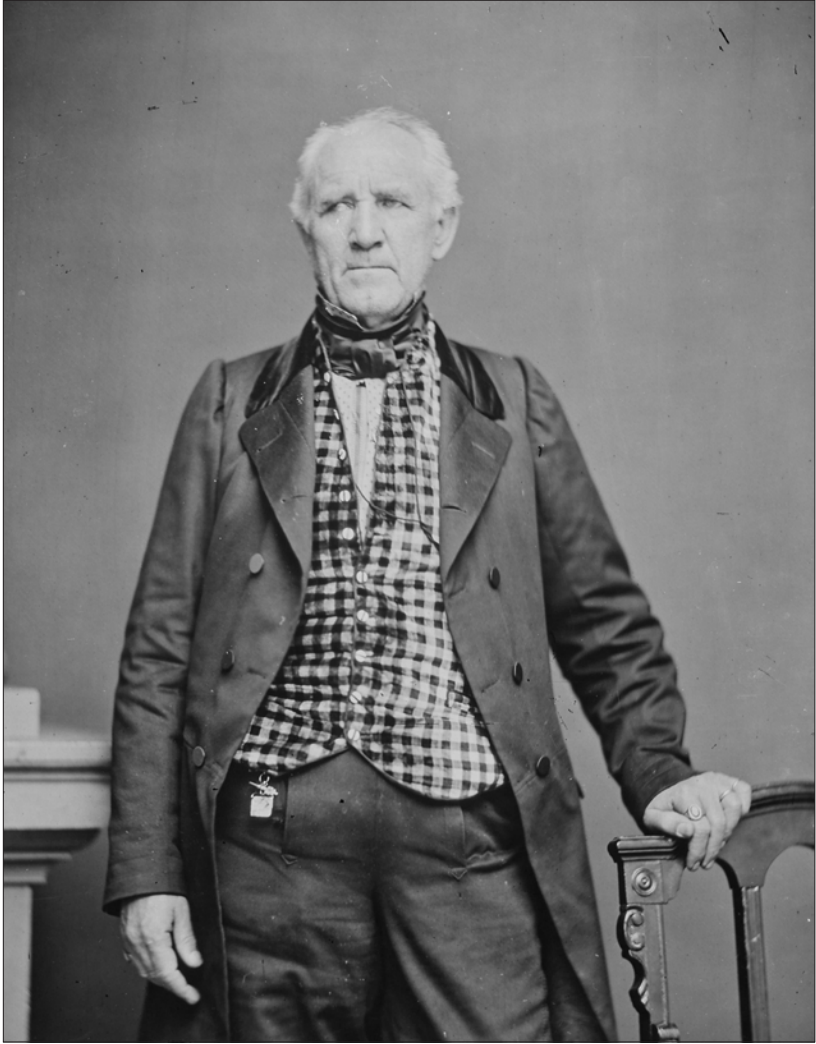
terminating orders of the administration,⁴³ stay the floodgate that traitors, highwaymen, public robbers (who thirst for gold), although crimson with the blood of their fellow men, have raised to drain the treasury in sending soldiers to murder an innocent and law abiding people, and only with a pittance of its tithes defray the expenses of a commission that would settle all difficulties, save all moneys, treasures of blood and the honor and dignity of a great nation.⁴⁴

General, I beseech you as an honorable Senator not to despise our cause, and lend your influence to prevent the greatest of all national calamities—civil war. I am done.

My feelings are as they ever have been towards you, and if you are not reciprocal, it is because you don't know me better. God bless you and preserve you.

⁴³He is probably alluding to the 1838 executive order issued by Governor Lilburn H. Boggs of Missouri to the state militia authorizing them to “exterminate” the Mormons who refused to leave the state. The Buchanan administration's instructions to the Utah Expedition and Governor Cumming were hardly of this character, emphasizing as they did the need to avoid force.

⁴⁴As discussed below, at about the time that Houston received Blair's letter, he urged Buchanan to empanel an investigatory commission much as the Pierce administration had earlier done to inquire into violence in Kansas Territory.



U.S. Senator Samuel ("Sam") Houston (1793–1863), photographed wearing one of his colorful waistcoats. During the Utah War, Houston remained cordial to Buchanan but was drawn to the Mormons' underdog position and driven by hatred of Albert Sidney Johnston. Courtesy of Mathew Brady Collection, National Archives.

Your friend and servant,
S. M. Blair⁴⁵

Postscript.—[Nauvoo Legion] Colonel George A. Smith and Professor Albert S. [G.] Carrington wished me to remember them to you in all kindness.⁴⁶

[P.]P.S. You will be at perfect liberty to make any use of this letter your wisdom may dictate.

Sam Houston received Seth Blair's remarkable plea for help in mid-February, perhaps as early as the 10th but certainly by the 15th or 16th.⁴⁷ On February 17, 1858, John Bernhisel wrote to Brigham Young, describing the recent arrival of Blair's still-confidential letter,

⁴⁵The *New York Herald's* version of the letter printed the initial for Blair's first name as "J" rather than "S," an error attributable to some combination of the reporter who interviewed Houston, the two telegraphers involved, or the newspaper's typesetter.

⁴⁶Houston had, of course, met George A. Smith during July 1856. He probably knew Carrington, who had stayed in Washington during the winter of 1850–51 to prepare the publication of the maps and report of the Stansbury Expedition. In Utah, Carrington had joined this army-sponsored expedition to chart the Great Salt Lake as a civilian surveyor. In 1857 Carrington's principal occupation was as editor of the *Deseret News*; the title "professor" came from his role as a regent and chancellor of the University of Deseret, then an embryonic and largely nonfunctioning institution in Salt Lake City.

⁴⁷Van Wagenen argues in "Sam Houston and the Utah War," 73–74, that Houston received Blair's letter in Washington in the second week of January 1858, apparently because Bernhisel refers to it in a letter to Young, the retained copy of which in the LDS Church History Library is misdated December 17, 1857. From the internal evidence of this letter and the time lags associated with the passage of mail from Salt Lake City to Washington via the California-Panama route, it is clear that Bernhisel's letter to Young mentioning Blair's letter, written December 1, 1857, to Houston, should have been dated February 17, 1858. On February 10–11, Houston spoke briefly on the Senate floor about the relative merits of volunteer and regular troops as reinforcements for the Utah Expedition and included a negative description of federal appointees in Utah consistent with Blair's, although he made no reference at that time to having received a letter from Blair, indicating that delivery of Blair's letter came somewhat later.

as well as his own inability to influence events. Bernhisel's reference to Blair's communication seems unusually low-key under the circumstances: "Yesterday morning Gen. Houston sent to me for perusal a letter which he had received from S.M. Blair Esq. In the afternoon I called at the Generals lodgings but he was not in. This morning I had an interview with him in the Senate Chamber; he promised to communicate with the President on the subject of the [Mormon] difficulties. He is in favor of a commission [to investigate affairs in Utah]."48

**THE "MAGNIFICENT BARBARIAN" IN ACTION:
TO THE SENATE FLOOR**

During the last week of February, Houston pressed Blair's letter into service, using it explicitly as the foundation for a long Senate speech that both opposed a substantial expansion of the regular army for use in Utah and criticized Albert Sidney Johnston's leadership of the expeditionary force already in the field. The speech came at a tumultuous time of political cross currents. Both houses of Congress had adopted resolutions demanding the documentary evidence on which Buchanan had based his decision to intervene; the president and secretary of war had formally requested the establishment of four more regiments to prosecute the war; proffers of volunteer units for Utah service were cascading into Washington from throughout the country; and war costs were mushrooming while the impact of the depression that followed the Panic of 1857 simultaneously reduced the flow of revenues to the Treasury to alarming levels. It was also a time when Houston had decided to return to Texas to run as governor.

Houston rose to address the Senate on February 25, 1858. Ironi-

⁴⁸Bernhisel, Letter to Young, December 17, 1857 [February 17, 1858]. Although Houston did not support Buchanan politically in 1856 and would not agree with General Scott that regulars would be more effective than volunteer troops for the Utah War, Houston was generally trying to be helpful to Buchanan in January 1858: "The administration and I get along well. [I]t is conservative, and so am I. It will be cautious, and so will I. . . . I am on good terms with Mr. Buchanan and his Cabinet. It is my intention to merit their confidences by supporting all measures in my opinion right, not allowing myself to indulge any prejudices. The country needs help, and I hope to be able to assist." Sam Houston, Letters to Margaret Lea Houston, January 9 and 11, 1858, in Roberts, ed., *The Personal Correspondence of Sam Houston*, 4:267, 271.

cally, it was the same day on which an exhausted Thomas L. Kane reached Salt Lake City to begin his mediating talks with Brigham Young. It was also the day on which a party of 200 Bannocks and Northern Shoshones raided the Mormon mission and Nauvoo Legion outpost at Fort Limhi, Oregon Territory, the Utah War's most violent incident after the Mountain Meadows Massacre and assassination of the Aiken party in September and November of 1857.

What would Sam Houston have sounded like on the Senate floor; what was his persona in that chamber? In describing Houston's speaking style, Peter H. Burnett, California's first governor, recalled his earlier stump speeches in Tennessee: "Houston, then in the prime of life, was a tall, noble Virginian, possessing a most commanding figure and voice, with a bold, flowery, and eloquent style of oratory. He had a great command of language, and spoke slowly, emphatically, and distinctly, so that all could hear him, and all wished to hear him. . . . While Houston [was] speaking, no one ever laughed, as [he] never dealt in amusing anecdotes. General Houston never succeeded at the bar. His mind was not of a legal cast."⁴⁹

Burnett's characterization of a younger Houston as avoiding levity was no longer strictly accurate. On February 10–11, 1858, Houston made brief remarks on the Utah War, trying to defuse strident calls for harsh treatment with humor that would have galled most Mormon observers but which probably were understood by the pragmatic and long-suffering Delegate Bernhisel as the helpful laugh-inducer that it became: "These are my views in relation to this emergency, and I am as anxious to see the country quiet as any one. I think that volunteers, active, sprightly, animated young men, going to that country, would be the best means of breaking up the Mormons. When they get there they will feel that they are cut off from the rest of the country, and be pleased to settle there. They will take wives from amongst the Mormons, and that will break up the whole establishment; it will take away their capital."⁵⁰

With respect to Houston's attire and demeanor in the Senate chamber, Mary J. Windle, a Washington society reporter who sent dis-

⁴⁹Peter Hardeman Burnett, *Recollections and Opinions of an Old Pioneer* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1880), 28.

⁵⁰Quoted in Van Wagenen, "Sam Houston and the Utah War," 74. On a very small scale, Houston's prediction of marriages between Utah Expedition soldiers and Mormon women came true later in 1858 and thereafter. A

patches to a Charleston, South Carolina, newspaper, limned a colorful portrait of the Texan in action during the Buchanan administration. For the benefit of her genteel readers, Windle went far beyond the visual impact of the white beaver hat, Cherokee blanket, and jaguar skin vest that prompted one observer, Senate shorthand reporter Oliver Dyer, to describe the senator as “a magnificent barbarian somewhat tempered by civilization.”⁵¹ (See cover.)

Finer subjects for pen-painting it would not be easy to find than some of the faces before us, and we propose to point out to our distant readers the appearance and traits of those forming the first [leading] deliberative body in the world. On the left hand of the entrance door [to the Senate chamber] our roving eye rests upon as formidable a looking person as any captain of banditti in Mrs. Radcliff’s novels.⁵² You can see that this gentleman (Gen. Houston) has a contempt for conventionalities; for he ties his neckcloth in a very clumsy bow, and wears a tiger-skin vest, built as if for an Arctic expedition.⁵³ His face is almost covered with menacing whiskers of an iron-gray color; and such shaggy and threatening brows overhang his eyes, that one dreads to look what kind of eyes they are. Gen. Houston’s whole life has been a chain of romantic episodes, and people overlook his eccentricities as they over-

case in point is Private Charles H. Wilcken, a deserter from Light Battery B, Fourth U.S. Artillery, who converted to Mormonism, married a Mormon woman, and remained in Utah. His descendants include U.S. presidential candidates George Wilcken Romney and Willard Mitt Romney. The family tree of another U.S. presidential candidate, Jon E. Huntsman, also includes a Utah War deserter, Private Robert S. Gyles, of Company B, Fifth Infantry.

⁵¹Quoted in James L. Haley, *Sam Houston* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 296.

⁵²Ann Ward Radcliffe (1764–1823) was an enormously popular English author specializing in Gothic novels featuring young women in peril, omnipresent villains, brooding castles and manor houses, and supernatural forces.

⁵³The vest was made from the hide of a jaguar to which Houston occasionally referred in emphasizing that politically he did not change “his spots.” Depending on the reporter, this garment was described as the hide of a leopard, jaguar, tiger, or cougar. It is an interesting counterpoint that, on February 25, 1858, the day Houston made his floor remarks prompted by Blair’s letter, Thomas L. Kane rode into Salt Lake City with part of his gear wrapped in a tiger skin.

look the rough coat of a pineapple, because they know there is fruit at the core.⁵⁴

In his February 25 speech, with Seth Blair's letter in hand, Houston came at his defense of the unpopular Mormons obliquely, easing into the subject, not through a frontal assault on anti-Mormonism in the Senate and elsewhere or by overtly supporting Brigham Young, but rather through the more emotionally (and politically) neutral subject of whether volunteers or regulars would be more effective troops in such a campaign. As the following excerpts indicate, Houston then turned to matters of tactics and the effectiveness of both Buchanan's decisions and Albert Sidney Johnston's leadership.⁵⁵

Mr. President, I believe the subject has assumed rather a new phase, and that this is now understood to be a proposition to increase the regular Army permanently, by this addition to the present peace establishment of the standing Army. If I apprehend the views of some gentlemen, I think I am right in saying so. . . .

But of what material will you compose your regular army? Of "cheap material." I am not in favor of that cheap material. Is it that you wish to send them out to Utah to get destroyed? Do you think it is a speculation on the part of the nation to get that material because it is cheap? I am for economizing the public Treasury of this nation, but I wish to do it on some rational principles. I wish to do it by the employment of volunteers.

We are told that there is a costliness about volunteers; that they are more expensive than regular soldiers. That may be true; but I doubt it. . . .

I do not believe, notwithstanding all the calculations that have been made, that volunteer troops are more expensive than regulars. I could show this by the celerity of volunteers. If there be an emergency, such as is stated by gentlemen, how is it to be met? Is it not by present action? Is it not to be promptly done? Are we to protract the war from year to year? Are we to take more than a year to fill up these three regiments, and are all operations to remain suspended until we raise this additional force? If it is necessary, if this is the purpose, you cannot move those already advancing on Utah. . . .

⁵⁴Mary J. Windle, "Senate Chamber—General Houston," January 1858, in her *Life in Washington, and Life Here and There* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1859), 32–33. See also Virginia Clay-Clopton's more benign description of this scene referred to in note 18.

⁵⁵Senator Sam Houston, Floor Remarks, U.S. Senate, February 25, 1858, *Congressional Globe*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., 1858, 873–75.

It was not intended to use a standing army composed of mercenaries, of men of other countries, picked up at random, to operate upon the citizens of this country. No, sir; it was supposed that if the American people had to be subdued, it would be done by their peers, whose presence would rebuke them for insubordination or insurrection; and not by a regular force made up of mercenaries whose only resource was their employment in the Army, and who had none of the endearments of life to fall back upon when they had executed the orders of their officers.⁵⁶

This is the spirit in which the Constitution was framed. These were the feelings that animated its authors, who declared their open detestation of anything like the employment of a federal force to control citizens, and reduce them to subordination to the laws. Therefore, sir, I am opposed to the increase of the regular Army; and if it is intended for the Mormons, I tell you that we cannot wait two years to raise troops to subdue them. If they have to be subdued—and God forfend [preserve] us from such a result—and the valley of Salt Lake is to be ensanguined with the blood of American citizens, I think it will be one of the most fearful calamities that has befallen this country, from its inception to the present moment. I deprecate it as an intolerable evil. I am satisfied that the executive [president] has not had the information he ought to have had on this subject before making such a movement as he has directed to be made. I am convinced that facts have been concealed from him. I think his wisdom and patriotism should have dictated the propriety of ascertaining, in the first place, whether the people of Utah were willing to submit to the authority of the United States. Why not send to them men to whom they could unbosom themselves, and see whether they would say, “we are ready to submit to the authorities of the United States, if you send to us honest men and gentlemen, whose morals, whose wisdom, and whose character, comport with the high station they fill; we will surrender to them; we will give up our authority, and act in obedience to the laws of the United States.” If this course had been taken by the Executive, I am sure he would never have recommended war; and if the facts had been before the Secretary of War, I am sure he would never have made the recommendation [for more troops] which he has submitted to us. . . .

⁵⁶Houston refers to the fact that approximately half the troops of the antebellum regular army were born in Europe and that many enlisted for five years because of an inability to find honest work otherwise. Charles H. Wilcken, for instance, had served in the Prussian Army, arrived in Manhattan destitute, and joined the Fourth U.S. Artillery in the spring of 1857.

I insist that Texas does not want regular troops.⁵⁷ If you will give her rangers you may withdraw every one of the three thousand soldiers that have been stationed there . . . and appropriate them to the necessities of the Mormon war, or whatever service you please. The more men you send to the Mormon war the more you increase the difficulty. They have to be fed. For some sixteen hundred [1,200] miles you have to transport provisions. The regiments sent there have found Fort Bridger and other places, as they approached them, heaps of ashes. They will find Salt Lake, if they ever reach it, a heap of ashes. They will find that they will have to fight against Russia and the Russians.⁵⁸ Whoever goes there will meet the fate of Napoleon's army when he went to Moscow. Just as sure as we are now standing in the Senate, these people, if they fight at all, will fight desperately. They are defending their homes. They are fighting to prevent the execution of threats that have been made, which touch their hearths and their families; and depend upon it they will fight until every man perishes before he surrenders.⁵⁹ That is not all. If they do not choose to go into conflict immediately, they will secure their women and children in the fastnesses of the mountains; they have provisions for two years; and they will carry on a guerrilla warfare which will be most terrific to the troops you send there. They will get no supplies there. You will have to transport them all from Independence, in Missouri. When the fire will consume it, there will not be a spear of grass left [for their animals] that will not be burnt.

In addition to that universal desolation, they have cañons, they have ravines, and they have turbulent rivers to cross. A hundred men

⁵⁷The fifth new regiment being recommended to Congress by Buchanan and Secretary of War Floyd was earmarked for frontier duty in Texas.

⁵⁸Houston here picks up the mantra invoked by Brigham Young since August 1857, that he would conduct a massive scorched-earth policy coupled with a fighting retreat to hidden strongholds in Utah's mountains reminiscent of the evacuation and burning of Moscow and Sebastopol by the Russians during Napoleon's invasion and the more recent Crimean War. The incineration of Forts Bridger and Supply were intended as graphic examples of this Mormon resolve.

⁵⁹For a discussion of the role that threatening rhetoric by the Utah Expedition's officers and troops played in stiffening Mormon determination to bar federal troops and their campfollowers from entering the Salt Lake Valley, see MacKinnon, "Sex, Subalterns, and Steptoe: Army Behavior, Mormon Rage, and Utah War Anxieties," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 76 (Summer 2008): 227-46.

on the sides of those cañons can roll down rocks enough to keep the army engaged a week in getting them out of the way, and there is no place to put them. I am told by persons who have traversed it, that the passway is a mere space between precipitous and high mountains barely sufficient for the passage of a wagon. In times of rain a little rivulet courses its way through, and there they have made a road of width sufficient for the passage of one wagon only. How long would it take to throw obstructions there that would render it impassable? How long could they delay your army in that way? And when they arrived at Salt Lake, exhausted, worn down, without supplies and munitions, in what situation would they be to take to the mountains and to pursue these men in their fastnesses where ten men could resist a thousand? . . . I am told there is a road for fifty miles which you have to pass, that is very difficult under the most favorable circumstances. Then, after you strike the margin of Salt Lake, there again is a precipitous mountain of several hundred feet high and perpendicular, on which an enemy could stand and act.⁶⁰

But this is not all. The rivers are impassable except by ferry-boats. Do you think the Mormons will let the ferry-boats remain? Will they not destroy them?⁶¹ There are no means there of making them; there is no suitable timber. How are they to carry the army and the supplies across? To reach Salt Lake City would require a march of many days from where the army are now, if they had no obstacles to encounter, no impediments in their way, and no enemy to encounter. I received the other day from a very intelligent Mormon whom I knew in Texas, and a very respectable man he was, once I believe the United States

⁶⁰It is not clear what formidable landmark Houston is describing in close proximity to the Great Salt Lake. His immediately preceding remarks are primarily a description of the terrain (that he had never seen) between Fort Bridger and Salt Lake City, especially heavily fortified Echo Canyon. Once they marched through Echo Canyon in June 1858, the Utah Expedition's officers and accompanying journalists ridiculed as insubstantial the barriers and hidden firing positions built by the Nauvoo Legion. The country's fear of an army debacle in Echo Canyon was fueled by horror stories that came out of the disastrous campaigning of the British Army in the mountain passes of Afghanistan during the 1840s.

⁶¹As Houston spoke, Colonel Johnston was preparing to negotiate with Chief Washakie to use his Northern Shoshone warriors to operate and defend the critical Green River ferries in northeast Utah. To the east, on the Sweetwater River, Johnston had already built bridges to replace fords; and once on the march to Salt Lake City in June 1858, he would use Bee's Volunteer Battalion to do likewise west of Fort Bridger.

district attorney for Utah, a letter of seven pages. In that letter he takes a comprehensive view of this subject. He protests most solemnly that there never would have been the least hostility to the authorities of the United States if the President had sent respectable men there. He says that Governor Brigham Young has been anxious to get rid of the cares of office, and would freely have surrendered it and acknowledged the authority of the United States; but that men have gone there, who have made threats that they would hang them, and even threats of a character that renders them more sensitive in relation to their families, and that they expect nothing but rapine and destruction to ensue on the advent of those troops if they should ever arrive there.

I know not what course will be taken on this subject. I hope it will be one of conciliation. As for troops to conquer the Mormons, fifty thousand would be as inefficient as two or three thousand; and in proportion as you send troops in that vast region, without supplies, and without the hope of them, with no means of subsistence after a certain period, unless it is transported to them, the greater will be your danger. Consider the facilities these people have to cut off your supplies. I say your men will never return, but their bones will whiten the valley of Salt Lake. If war begins, the very moment one single drop of blood is drawn, it will be the signal of extermination.

Mr. President,⁶² in my opinion, whether we are to have a war with the Mormons or not, will depend on the fact whether our troops advance or not. If they do not advance; if negotiations be opened; if we understand what the Mormons are really willing to do; that they are ready to acquiesce in the mandates of the Government, and render obedience to the Constitution; if you will take time to ascertain that, and not repudiate all idea of peace, we may have peace. But so sure as the troops advance, so sure they will be annihilated. You may treble them, and you will only add to the catastrophe, not diminish human suffering. These people expect nothing but extermination, or abuse more intolerable than even extermination would be, from your troops, and they will oppose them.

We have a clear manifestation in a letter that was read here the other day of the course proposed to be taken by the commanding officer there [Colonel Johnston], against whom I wish to say nothing. I shall animadvert, however, as I may think fit, on the circumstances that were there disclosed. I believe I saw the letter; but I am not cer-

⁶²Technically Houston was addressing the president of the Senate, Vice President John C. Breckinridge, or the president pro tem, but his real target audience was clearly President Buchanan and the nation.

tain yet that I fully comprehend it.⁶³ An act of civility was tendered by Brigham Young, and you might, if you please, construe it, under the circumstances, rather as an act of submission on his part. He sent salt to the troops, understanding that it was scarce there, and was selling at seven dollars a pint. As an act of humanity, thinking at least that it could not be regarded as discourteous, he sent a supply of salt requisite for the relief of the encampment, intimating to the commander that he could pay for it, if he would not accept of it as a present. What was the message the military officer sent him back? I believe the substance of it was that he would have no intercourse with a rebel, and that when they met they would fight. They will fight; and if they fight, he will get miserably whipped.

That was a time to make peace with Brigham Young, because there is something [symbolically] potent in salt. With the Turk, who has similar habits and religion to the Mormons, it is the sacrament of perpetual friendship.⁶⁴ Why may not the Mormons have incorporated that into their creed? But, instead of that, he [Johnston] sent him a taunt and defiance. Why could he not have said: "I will accept it as a present, or I will recompense you for it according to its value? I would rather see Brigham Young; and if he chooses to come to my encampment, I pledge him the honor of an officer that he shall go away unscathed if we come to no understanding; but if he wishes to acknowledge the authority of the United States, I am ready to receive that acknowledgment; and if the Government of the United States bids me, I will withdraw my troops." If he had sent that message it would have been worthy of a magnanimous, generous soldier's mind and heart. As it was, he sent a message I would not have sent, and I do not think it is calculated to conciliate Brigham Young. He is too proud a man, I take it; a man of too much sense to have sent such a message as that, after an act of civility was tendered.⁶⁵

What is to be the consequence of that act? We must have supplies. I presume the troops have cattle; and they must slaughter them in or-

⁶³It is possible that Houston refers to an unattributed report (actually written by A. G. Browne Jr.), "Later from the Utah Expedition. Brigham Young's Salt Rejected," Dispatch (Camp Scott), December 2, 1857, *New-York Daily Tribune*, February 2, 1858, 5/1-2.

⁶⁴Because of their common acceptance of polygamy, many non-Mormons compared Latter-day Saints to Muslims, a perception strengthened by Brigham Young's defense of Mormon plural marriage that periodically referred to the biblical patriarch Abraham's multiple wives.

⁶⁵The Utah Expedition's embarrassing and inconvenient shortage of salt at Fort Bridger arose from the mistaken assumption of army quartermasters at Fort Leavenworth in July 1857 that the expedition would be in

der to have fresh supplies. They will be very fresh supplies, indeed, if they have no salt to use with them. Placing men upon [a] diet of that kind is calculated to produce the most fatal of all epidemics in the world—the cholera. Exposed in tents in that inclement region at this season, I should not be astonished if two thirds or three fourths of his forces were swept off by cholera.⁶⁶ Humanity ought to have induced him to accept the salt and make a fair recompense for it, if he did not receive it as a courtesy; but an opposite course was taken. If there be

Salt Lake City by the fall with access to the Great Salt Lake's mineral deposits. Hence Johnston's troops carted brine pans across the plains but very little salt. As an indication of the salt incident's emblematic importance, Brigham Young ranted to Kane about it soon after Houston's speech, although neither man knew in Utah what was unfolding in the Senate. Kane's jumbled notes recorded Young as complaining about the political capital he had expended with the hospitable gesture of offering salt to the enemy when some Mormon leaders opposed him. To Kane, Young emoted: "And how was it—*it* received? How was the men, the men with the bad frost-bite just the same—the men who had lugged it all that way through the snow received? Was it *gentlemen* told them to turn about and go back—told them if they once showed their faces again they would be shot?—*Gentlemen*, don't tell me that!" At some point in 1858, even President Buchanan told Bernhisel that "Colonel Johnston should not have sent the salt back." As late as 1862, Mormon travelers crossing the plains still used Albert Sidney Johnston's rejection of the Mormon salt as emblematic of churlishness and a lack of civility. Thomas L. Kane, draft letter to Buchanan, ca. March 15, 1858, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah; John M. Bernhisel, "Account of Conversations with President James Buchanan," June 1859, LDS Church History Library; Homer Duncan (25 miles east of Fort Laramie), Letter to Brigham Young, August 22, 1862, LDS Church History Library. Within three weeks of Houston's floor remarks, another such incident, to Kane's dismay, arose over Johnston's rejection of Young's proffer of thousands of pounds of Mormon flour and hundreds of beef cattle.

⁶⁶Contrary to Houston's prediction, which was probably based on the recent British experience in the Crimean War and an imperfect understanding of cholera's causes, the Utah Expedition was virtually disease-free during the winter of 1857–58. The contrast to the cholera-racked posts of Kansas was so stark that the army's surgeon general undertook to study the difference. Medically, the Utah Expedition's troops benefited from Camp Scott's 7,000-foot elevation and its proximity to the pure, swift-flowing waters of Black's Fork.

any disastrous consequences resulting, his message was calculated to bring them about.

Mr. President, I shall not longer occupy the precious time of the Senate. My idea is, that volunteers are the cheapest and most reliable troops, because they have more physical energy and activity; and, as a mass, more intelligence than regulars. Though their officers may not be as educated, yet the mass of the rank and file are of that character that they embody the average intelligence generally of the citizens of the United States. . . . If the Mormons are to be conquered, volunteers can conquer them immediately the regulars, never. . . .

**“MORMONS & WAR, AND PROFLIGATE SCOUNDRELS”:
HOUSTON’S SELF-ASSESSMENT**

What did Sam Houston think of his own speech? The answer—as well as his inner thoughts about Buchanan, Johnston, and homesickness—soon appeared in one of Houston’s near-daily letters to his wife, Margaret Lea Houston, then at their home in Huntsville, Texas, written on February 26, 1858. A few days later, on March 1, Houston’s personal correspondence to his wife again focused on Mormon matters.⁶⁷ It is interesting that, although Houston adopted many of Blair’s arguments and even phrasing in his letters, he chose not to mention Blair in his correspondence, even though he had alluded to him in his floor remarks of February 25.

February 26, 1858

. . . On yesterday, I wrote you a letter, and just as I finished it, I blotted it by accident and would not send it. So of the 25th, you will get no letter.

I had been occupied all day, and had just made a short speech on the army Bill to raise Regulars, and some say I defeated it. It was lost in the Senate.⁶⁸ I apprehend you will think that late canvass [election campaign] got me in such a way of speaking, that I don’t know when to stop. Well heretofore I have not spoken a great deal, and may be borne with so long as I speak sense. I will send you the [Congressio-

⁶⁷Sam Houston, Letters to Margaret Lea Houston, February 26 and March 1, 1858, in Roberts, *The Personal Correspondence of Sam Houston*, 4:286–87, 290–91. For access to these and other Houston letters, I thank Madge Thornall Roberts of San Antonio, a Houston descendant, the senator’s biographer, and the editor of his personal correspondence.

⁶⁸Congress would not resolve the matter of Buchanan’s plea for an expansion of the army until early April and, even then, approved only three of the five regiments requested, none of which were called into service.

nal] Globe, that you may judge for yourself. The speech is clever enough to be done, as Burns says, "A free off hand."⁶⁹ So it was, and the notes of my speech, I never read.

I can only say to day that I do cordially thank you, for your letter just read, of the 13th Inst, and our son Sam [age fourteen], for his of the 11th.⁷⁰ To hear from home is like an Aoses [oasis] in the wasted wilderness, to a weary Pilgrim. I have told, and again I tell you, that I am heartless here, for it abides with you, and where you are.

. . . I am supporting him [President Buchanan] with great integrity of purpose, but in favor of a standing army, I can not go. I am a Democrat of the true Jackson American stamp, and can not be any thing else. The army, & Navy, are to prostrate, or ruin our country. It is written, and no one can doubt it, who will reflect, and compare, the incidents, with inevitable consequences. You will see in my speech mailed to you, that my mind is not easy on this subject, as well as in my former speches!

The doings about the Mormons is all wrong, and will result in terrific disaster, or shame to the Nation, & perhaps both!

I do not think Mr Buchanan was very anxious to have the Army Bill to pass, only so far as it was considered, an administrative measure. If it were ever so dear to his heart, I could not give my support to it. The Commander of the Expedition is *our* Genl A.S. Johns[t]on, of Texas. He will not do, and if you read my speech, you will get an inkling, of what I think of him. I have not gone back, to his *infamous* conduct in Texas, when he tried to subvert the Government, and destroy the country, for selfish ends! I propose to expose him yet!

March 1, 1858

Before the Senate meets this morning, I am in my seat that I may be able to write you a line if perchance you can read it, when you get it.⁷¹ For the first time this session, I walked to the Capitol, and my hand is unsteady, from exercise of walking.

The Ball opens to day, on the admission [to statehood] of Kansas, (in the senate,) under the Lecompton Constitution. We will I have no

⁶⁹He is alluding to "Epistle to a Young Friend" (1786) by Scottish poet Robert Burns: "Aye, free off-hand your story tell, / When with a bosom crony, / But some things, it might be as well, / To scarcely tell to any."

⁷⁰Sam Houston Jr. attended Bastrop Military Institute (later Texas Military Institute, Austin). Following Confederate service during the Civil War in which he was wounded and taken prisoner, he attended Baylor University, followed by medical school at the University of Pennsylvania.

⁷¹Houston wrote this letter at his desk in the Senate chamber. Members of Congress did not then have offices in the Capitol.

doubt, have a warm time, in the discussion. I will take no part in it, for it would [do] no good, and as I shall vote the wishes, of my constituents, I foresee the evil to grow out of the policy, as well as the Mormon war. I am no Mormon, & the evil of the difficulty has grown out of the policy pursued by Pierce, and kept up by Mr. Buchanan. Men were sent there of worse morals, than the Mormons. For instance, a man by the name of [Associate Justice W. W.] Drummond, who left a wife, & family in Ill[inois] starving, & from this place took a *hussy* (I will not call her a woman) and introduced her at various places, Independence Mo, & Santa Fe, and San Francisco as his wife, and at Salt Lake lived with her as such. Others were men [of] dissolute habits, and these facts were known to the Mormons. Now my dear this Mormon war has been predicated, on the reports of such men, and the Mormons have never refused to receive federal officers, and respect them. So upon these premises, the President has sent Troops to subdue them, and Genl A.S. Johns[t]on is sent to the work, and of all men living the least qualified for such business. If the Mormons chuse [sic] to do it, they can destroy the whole command. If blood is drawn, the Troops will be annihilated, and then a war will ensue, more troublesome [than] that of Billy Bowlegs in Florida. Some wag, and some go. Now Dearest, after the dissertation on Mormons & war, and profligate scoundrels, I will have to close my letter.

As I hope to write soon again, I will not mix love matters with such stuff, & *vice*, and folly.⁷²

Immediately after his speech on the Senate floor, Houston gave Seth Blair's letter to the Washington correspondent of the *New York Herald*, who copied it and, on February 28, telegraphed it to his newspaper. On March 2 the paper published the letter in its entirety under the heading "The Mormon Question. Interesting Letter from Great

⁷²The senator signed both letters "Thy Devoted Houston" and addressed them to "My Dear Love" and "My Dearest." Notwithstanding the fact that he had killed several men, Houston definitely had a tender, romantic side to his personality. At one of President Buchanan's Executive Mansion receptions, Mrs. Windle, the society gossip, observed Houston in a corner inspecting a wooden heart that he had whittled for Harriet Lane, the president's niece-hostess. Once, upon entering the Senate gallery, Virginia Clay-Clopton caught Senator Houston's eye as he was whittling. "He suspended his occupation and blew us a kiss. . . . A little while afterward one of the Senate pages came up and handed me a most pretentious envelope. . . . I found within a tiny, shiny, freshly whittled wooden heart, on which the roguish old hero had inscribed, 'Lady! I send thee my heart! Sam Houston.'" Clay-Clopton, *A Belle of the Fifties*, 99.

Salt Lake to Gen. Sam Houston.” The *Herald* prefaced Blair’s letter with an explanatory paragraph from its Washington reporter:

The following letter has just been received by Gen. Houston, from one S.M. Blair, who holds a high position in Brigham Young’s council in Salt Lake—that of District Attorney.⁷³ The general informs me that he was a soldier under him in the Texas revolution, and emigrated to the Mormon country some years ago [1850]. It appears that there are at the present time, two or three hundred of these brave men, better known as the Texas Rangers in that Territory, who, it also appears, do the outside fighting for Brigham Young and his deluded followers by contract.⁷⁴ By perusing the following letter the reader can easily see what their determination is. Gen. Houston says he knows this man well, and that he and those who act with him, will perform to the letter what they promise below.

Three weeks later, Houston again spoke about the Utah War in the Senate. On March 18, he briefly interrupted California senator William Gwin’s emotional but largely accurate floor speech on the Mountain Meadows Massacre to raise doubts about the assumption that Mormons were responsible for the atrocity: “I am opposed to this indiscriminate warfare upon Indians, or Mormons, or any other people, until their guilt is ascertained. I want the facts as to who perpetrated the crime ascer-

⁷³In February 1858, John M. Hockaday, not Blair, was Utah’s U.S. attorney, a position that Blair had vacated in 1854.

⁷⁴Whether this assertion of 200–300 Rangers was made by Houston or the *Herald* reporter, it was an embellishment on Blair’s own hyperbolic claim in the letter’s text of 100 Texas Rangers supporting the Mormon cause. Houston, if not the reporter, would have recognized that Blair’s evocation of Texas Rangers involved in the Utah War raised a specter perhaps lost on analysts of later decades—the savagery of a frontier guerrilla conflict. In 1858 the Rangers’ image was often associated with perceptions of freebooting, undisciplined, and brutal behavior quite different than their later (and current) sanitized reputation as an elite, orderly state police force. While serving as Albert Sidney Johnston’s successor as commander of the Second U.S. Cavalry in Texas, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee approved the removal of Texas Rangers from sensitive international border duty in favor of their use in the more bare-knuckle combat with Texas’s tribal adversaries. Michael L. Collins, *Texas Devils: Rangers and Regulars on the Lower Rio Grande, 1846–1861* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 208.

tained, and then inflict punishment according to the offense.”⁷⁵

“TURNING AWAY THAT FEARFUL STORM”: HOUSTON’S IMPACT

From Sam Houston’s letters to his wife immediately after the event, it is apparent that the senator was fully satisfied with his floor remarks about the Utah War. But gauging the impact of Houston’s Blair-inspired February 25 speech as a historical event is a far more difficult challenge. What is clear is that the proposed expansion of the regular army sought by the Buchanan administration (four regiments for Utah and one for Texas) and opposed by Houston died in Congress. Houston surely deserves some credit for its defeat. Within four months of Houston’s February speech, the active or armed phase of the Utah War concluded without further bloodshed yet with an element of face-saving for both sides of the confrontation.

Surely Houston’s behind-the-scenes influence with a beleaguered, dithering President Buchanan was as significant as the far better-known impact on Brigham Young’s decision-making exerted by Thomas L. Kane, who shuttled between Salt Lake City and Fort Bridger to arrange the accommodation between Young and Cumming.⁷⁶ For example, in January 1858, as Congress took steps to investigate the handling and cost of Buchanan’s Utah Expedition, Houston had first urged the president to follow Pierce’s example of commissioning a small congressional fact-finding body to examine reasons for Kansas’s civil unrest and violence. That information became foundational to the decision on how best to use the army to pacify Kansas. Houston repeated his January advice to the president in his February speech.

⁷⁵Sam Houston, Floor Remarks, March 18, 1858, *Congressional Globe*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., 1858, 1176–77. What eventually became apparent was that a unit of the Nauvoo Legion and its Indian auxiliaries were responsible for the massacre of 120 men (first disarmed), women, and children emigrating from Arkansas to California, a culpability that the LDS Church admitted and for which it expressed regret in the early twenty-first century. What continues to fuel debate is the question of whether Brigham Young ordered the massacre or whether the killings were the work of an isolated militia unit operating without authorization 300 miles from Church and Nauvoo Legion headquarters.

⁷⁶For Kane’s Utah War role, see Matthew J. Grow, *“Liberty to the Down-trodden”*: *Thomas L. Kane, Romantic Reformer* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009); MacKinnon, *At Sword’s Point*, Part 2.

In early April 1858, while Kane was independently holding his unsponsored discussions in Utah, Buchanan finally acted on Houston's advice and appointed a two-man peace commission to travel to Utah. However, rather than fact-finding or negotiating with Brigham Young, they were directed to present him with a take-it-or-leave-it arrangement: acceptance of Cumming as Utah's governor and the uncontested entrance of the Utah Expedition into the Salt Lake Valley in exchange for a blanket presidential pardon for Utah's entire population and an understanding that the troops would construct a garrison away from Utah's populated areas. As the commissioners prepared to leave Washington for the plains, the *New-York Daily Tribune's* correspondent in the capital reported, "Ben McCulloch, an old Texas Ranger, and ex-Gov. [Lazarus W.] Powell, of Kentucky, start immediately for Leavenworth, and will go forward with the reinforcements to the Utah army, acting as Commissioners . . . to prevent bloodshed if possible. . . . Gen. Sam Houston has been mainly instrumental in getting commissioners appointed, which plan was abandoned several months ago."⁷⁷

McCulloch and Powell reached Salt Lake City in early June 1858, several weeks after Kane had left to return east following his major accomplishment—getting Brigham Young to accept Cumming as his gubernatorial successor. Of the two commissioners, Powell, then Kentucky's U.S. Senator-elect, was unknown in Utah. But McCulloch, U.S. marshal for the eastern district of Texas, arrived in Salt Lake City with credentials flowing from three important, intertwined relationships: his well-known March 1857 status as Buchanan's first choice to be Utah's new governor; his longstanding role as Sam Houston's protégé in both Texas and Washington; and his decades-old friendship with Seth Blair, a relationship rooted in their joint service in the Texas War of Independence as well as the Texas Rangers. In addition there are signs that, despite the bitter Houston-Johnston enmity, McCulloch maintained an independent view of Johnston that included, as discussed above, admiration.

This article, with its focus on Houston's role in the Utah War, is not the place for an extensive description of McCulloch's fourteen-month involvement in this conflict, but it is important to recognize that there was one. Houston, of course, was instrumental in rallying

⁷⁷"From Washington," dispatch of April 6, 1858, *New-York Daily Tribune*, April 10, 1858, 2/4.

public opinion and convincing Buchanan to try an alternative approach in Utah when the president apparently saw no other option than continued military force. McCulloch, on the other hand, trusted by both Buchanan and Houston, was key in effecting this peaceful outcome. Once McCulloch and Powell were holding face-to-face discussions with Brigham Young and his counselors about accepting the president's somewhat thorny olive branch, McCulloch's firmness, force of personality, and rapport/credibility with Blair, rather than Powell's more senior status, carried the day. It is telling that, as Buchanan's peace commissioners arrived in town, Lieutenant General Daniel H. Wells, the Nauvoo Legion's commander, wrote to Blair, who was then in Fillmore in central Utah:

Dear Brother. Major Cullough [sic] of Texas of the Peace Commission is at G.S.L. City in connection with Gov Powell and has expressed a wish to see you. If you can make it convenient to come to the city for that purpose, an interview would probably be gratifying to you as well as him and may result in good. The Major feels that his time will not admit of his going so far as Fillmore City to visit you. All is well and may the Lord bless you and help Isreal [sic] to triumph over all their enemies—I remain as ever your Brother in the Gospel of Christ⁷⁸

Brigham Young grudgingly accepted Buchanan's terms, and the Utah Expedition marched into, through, and out of Salt Lake City on June 26, 1858, to establish Camp Floyd in the desert forty miles to the southwest, the nation's largest military garrison until the Civil War.

The principal importance of Houston's February remarks lay in their symbolic, if not moral, value. The image of a lone but legendary frontiersman rising in passionate defense of a reviled, beleaguered minority group was arresting. Houston's was a high-profile act that served as a partial counter-balance to the anti-Mormonism then rampant in Congress. It would be inaccurate to argue that Sam Houston's intervention at Major Seth M. Blair's behest settled the Utah War. But it is fair to say that his influence in Washington and reputation as perhaps the country's best-known frontiersman were among the major forces contributing to the resolution of the conflict in the summer of 1858. Thomas L. Kane's now well-known intervention in Utah was essential to this outcome, although for much of 1858, it was largely invis-

⁷⁸Daniel H. Wells, Letter to Seth Blair, June 9, 1858, LDS Church History Library.

ible. Sam Houston's dramatic comments about the Utah War in Washington were an important complement to Kane's independent efforts.

Determining the reaction to Houston's speech among the U.S. Army officers at Fort Bridger and among senior Mormon leaders in Salt Lake City is easier than assessing the historical significance of Houston's floor remarks. In his 1878 biography, William Preston Johnston—no doubt influenced by the views of his late father—quoted excerpts of Houston's speech while lumping it with a description of Thomas L. Kane's conflicted dealings with Colonel Johnston:

No new result was arrived at [from Kane's maneuverings], nor was Brigham Young without friends and allies at Washington. While General Johnston lay hemmed in by the avalanches of the Rocky Mountains, and nearly all Americans were anxious as to his fate, the ancient animosity of General Houston still pursued him. That veteran politician, from his place in the United States Senate, on the 25th of February, made the following remarks in allusion to the "salt" embassy, declaring at the same time that the Mormons expected extermination at the hands of the army. . . . But this fine spurt of senatorial rhetoric, for a wonder, culminated in cabals that merely hampered without overthrowing the officer assailed.⁷⁹

The *Deseret News* published substantial extracts from the text of Houston's February speech—tellingly, the only congressional oration of the period that the Mormon newspaper reprinted.⁸⁰ Apparently the first eastern newspaper reports of this event reached Salt Lake City on May 19, 1858, since Apostle George A. Smith, then Church historian, recorded this item in his office journal: "Prest Y[oung] & A[lbert] C[arrington] looking over a large bundle of [eastern newspa-

⁷⁹William Preston Johnston, *The Life of Albert Sidney Johnston*, 223–24.

⁸⁰Because of lags in mail delivery and the disruptions of the war, excerpts from the Houston speech were not published in Utah until late spring. In a probable allusion to Houston's remarks, the *Deseret News* editorialized: "There are still a few honorable men, however, who dare assert, even in Congress, that Utah has rights as well as other territories, and that the expedition set on foot against her is a crusade against the religion of her citizens; but they are very few." "Unfair Treatment of Utah," Editorial, *Deseret News*, June 2, 1858, 63/2.

per] scraps brought of [by] Jeter Clinton from Dr. Bernhisel. G. A. S[mith] and A.C. a[l]ternately reading items of congressional & other political & Utah news. At Prest. Young's request A.C. read Sam. Houstons speech on the Army bill in w[h]ich he refers very favorably to Prest. Young and the Saints."⁸¹

As with the Mormons' relationship with Thomas L. Kane, Sam Houston's willingness to help in 1858 prompted subsequent requests as well as expressions of deep gratitude even after the crisis of the Utah War had passed. On January 15, 1859, Blair wrote again at length to Houston—this time seeking the removal of obnoxious federal judges, support for Utah statehood, and a reduction in the army garrison to what he termed a "corporal's guard." Houston was less responsive. The Mormon community was no longer in mortal peril, and Houston was distracted by political plans for the state house in Austin as well as the White House in Washington. Still, later that year, George A. Smith recorded: "Prest. Young told S.M. Blair that he would like to see them bring out Genl. Sam Houston, for President of the U.S., in the *Mountaineer*. Blair [the newspaper's editor] said, if they brought him out in the *Mountaineer* he would be sure to be elected. President said, that was what he wanted, as he was the only man they could elect that would save the Union."⁸² In a remarkable display of both the power of prophetic suggestion and Seth Blair's responsiveness, the next issue of Salt Lake City's *The Mountaineer* ran an editorial endorsing Houston.⁸³

Thirteen years later in 1872, George A. Smith—then Brigham

⁸¹Historian's Office Journal, May 19, 1858, LDS Church History Library.

⁸²Seth Blair, Letter to Sam Houston, January 15, 1859, copy in my files courtesy of John Bond; Historian's Office Journal, October 4, 1859, LDS Church History Library. *The Mountaineer* started publication as a weekly newspaper in early 1859 through Blair and two other Mormon lawyers, James Ferguson and Hosea Stout, to counteract the impact of the new "anti" *Valley Tan*, which had started publication in Salt Lake City during November 1858.

⁸³"The Next President," Editorial, *The Mountaineer*, October 8, 1859, 26/1–2. Ironically, it was to Texas's governorship rather than to the presidency that Houston was elected that fall, although he continued to nurture unfulfilled hopes for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination in 1860.

Young's second counselor—reached out to another federal legislator, this time appealing to former U.S. senator Joseph S. Fowler of Tennessee over the polygamy prosecutions. In the process, Smith provided a glimpse of the continuing high-level LDS gratitude for Sam Houston's earlier help during the Utah War.

Your letter of Nov 17th is rece[i]ved per Hon. W.H. Hooper [Utah's congressional delegate]. I am thankful to you for the kind spirit and generous sentiments which prompted it. During the five general persecutions which have been successively poured upon the heads of the Latter Day Saints, before celestial marriage was known among them, our history fails to show the name of a single individual of national or extended state reputation, who has been moved to raise his voice to turn away from a devoted people the cruelly intolerant storm. . . .

In 1857 when the contractors war⁸⁴ was fulminated against us, not a single newspaper in the whole country published a kind sentiment concerning us, and the only man of national reputation who spoke a kind word for us, was the late Senator Houston of Texas, to whose efforts under Divine Providence we owe the turning away of that fearful storm. May we not hope that your own efforts, guided as they are by a love of American liberty, may produce a like result in the present junction. May the Lord of Hosts bless you.⁸⁵

EPILOGUE

Ben McCulloch, Sam Houston's protégé, died a hero's death on March 7, 1862, at Pea Ridge, Arkansas, as a Confederate brigadier. Similarly Albert Sidney Johnston, Houston's arch-enemy, fell at Shiloh, Tennessee, on April 6, 1862, while serving as the Confederacy's senior field general. Had he been alive, Sam Houston might well have been chagrined to see the elaborate procession organized by Texas veterans in 1867 to escort Johnston's body from a holding crypt in New Orleans to a prominent grave near Austin, Texas. Some historians view this symbolic cross-country funeral cortege, resembling Lincoln's only two years earlier, as an early move by former Confederate

⁸⁴This was one of the multiple Mormon shorthand labels for the Utah War loaded with cultural or political implications. Others were "Buchanan's Blunder," "Echo Canyon War," and "Johnston's Army."

⁸⁵George A. Smith, Letter to Joseph S. Fowler, June 30, 1872, Historian's Office Letterpress Copybooks, LDS Church History Library.

leaders to create what became the mythology of the “lost cause.”⁸⁶

Sam Houston died at age seventy in 1863 after having been removed preemptorily as Texas’s governor by state forces in 1861 for refusing to swear allegiance to the Confederacy. It was a removal quite different than Brigham Young’s gubernatorial departure three years earlier, but still one with enough parallels to shed light on the fierce independence of the two leaders. Houston supported Texas secession and its war effort, which both his sons served, but he drew the line at Jefferson Davis and the power of a centralized government in Richmond, to which Texas would be subordinated.

Brigham Young died fourteen years after Houston in 1877 at age seventy-six soon after his religiously adopted son, John D. Lee, was executed by firing squad for the Utah War’s Mountain Meadows Massacre. Young himself had shaken off his own war-related federal indictments for treason and murder. After 1858, he was no longer the federally sanctioned governor of his territory but was still very much the de facto ruler of a Utah changed forever by a lost confrontation with the U.S. government in which he and Sam Houston had figuratively stood shoulder to shoulder.

With the post-war reconciliations and scrambling to rewrite the history of the late nineteenth century, the national reputations of McCulloch, Johnston, Houston, and Young underwent a transformation that endowed them with near-mythic qualities. A sort of historical amnesia had enveloped the Utah War and its Mountain Meadows atrocity by the end of the nineteenth century as Utah settled into its newly won statehood and a son and grandson of Brigham Young marched off as West Pointers to defend the national colors in the Spanish-American War.

James Buchanan was less fortunate. In 1868, he died as a reviled former president, and his reputation has not improved markedly in the passing years. It was not until the administration of Herbert Hoover that a statue of Buchanan was dedicated in Washington even though his niece—the beneficiary of Sam Houston’s senatorial whittling of a little heart—had provided for its full cost forty years earlier. Even today, historians rank Buchanan’s presidency at or near the bottom of the list, a standing attributable to his administration’s corrup-

⁸⁶Jerry D. Thompson, “When Albert Sidney Johnston Came Home to Texas: Reconstruction Politics and the Reburial of a Hero,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 103 (April 2000): 453–78.

tion and “Old Buck’s” persistent image as a feckless chief executive who presided over the nation’s catastrophic slide into the blood bath of disunion.⁸⁷

As for Seth Blair, after the Utah War, he quietly continued life as a middling Mormon; but when he died at age fifty-six in 1875, the *Deseret News*’s obituary revisited and praised his 1857 letter to Sam Houston, concluding that it “was one of the means of turning the scale of the ‘contractors war’ against Utah.”⁸⁸ Blair himself was enormously proud of his role in bringing Sam Houston to the Mormons’ support. When the active phase of the Utah War was ending in the spring of 1858, he had written to George A. Smith:

Few are the opportunities afford[ed] to men of low estate to be heard on national Questions before the Peers of the Realm & Subjects of the nation—for the privilege I have enjoyed thro my letter to Genl Houston, for once I feel partialy satisfied with but felt that the good sense fine judgement & Statement [statesman] like Course of Bro Brigham would suffer if for a moment it was believed that I “held a high place (or low one) in his Council.” I felt gratified with Genl. H’s view of the Mormon Question & mutch pleased øf with your notice to do me the favor to forward me my published letter (by the by only a part of it was sent) none of Genl Houstons remarks pleased me so well as that on “Salt.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷MacKinnon, “Prelude to Armageddon: James Buchanan, Brigham Young, and a President’s Initiation to Bloodshed” (46–80) in the most recent assessment of Buchanan’s administration: John W. Quist and Michael J. Birkner, eds., *James Buchanan and the Coming Civil War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013).

⁸⁸“Departed,” Obituary, *Deseret [Daily] News*, March 18, 1875, 3/3.

⁸⁹Blair, Letter to George A. Smith, June 2, 1858.

REVIEWS

Kent P. Jackson, ed. *The King James Bible and the Restoration*. Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center/Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2012. x, 286 pp. Images, notes, index. Hardbound: \$23:99; ISBN-13: 978-0-8425-2802-3

Reviewed by Ronald E. Bartholomew

The King James Bible and the Restoration is a compilation of fifteen chapters based, for the most part, on scholarly presentations given at the King James Bible Symposium held at Brigham Young University February 23–24, 2012, and on the evening of February 25, 2012, at the Conference Center of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. All of the contributors are BYU faculty members.

A two-page introduction stating the purpose of the volume, with acknowledgements, is followed by “What the Bible Means to Latter-day Saints,” by Robert L. Millet, professor of ancient scripture. The importance of this chapter is not evident by its length—just over eight pages. I found three of Millet’s key ideas to be significant and profound:

First is his explanation of “God’s words,” and the process by which they are received and recorded:

Joseph Smith believed that the message of the Bible was true and from God, that the Bible was “God’s word.” I am not so certain he or modern Church leaders would be convinced that every sentence recorded in the testaments necessarily contains “God’s words,” meaning a direct quotation or a transcription of divine utterance. It is the spirit of revelation within and resting upon the one called of God that is the energizing force; and in most instances, God places the thought into the mind or heart of the revelator, who then clothes the oracle in language. Certainly there are times when a prophet records the words of God directly, but very often the “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:12) whispers to the prophet, who then speaks for God. In short, when God chooses to speak through an individual, that person does not become a mindless ventriloquist, an earthly

sound system through which the Almighty can voice himself. Rather, the person becomes enlightened and filled with intelligence or truth. . . . Clearly many factors impacted the prophetic message—personality, experience, vocabulary, literary talent, and so forth. The word of the Lord as spoken through Isaiah is quite different from the word of the Lord as spoken through Luke, and both are different from that spoken by Jeremiah or Mark. Further, it is worth noting that stone, bark, animal skins, wood, metals, baked clay, and papyrus were all used anciently to record inspired messages. The Latter-day Saint concern with the ancients is not the perfection with which such messages were recorded but with the inspiration of the message. More specifically, Latter-day Saints are interested in the fact that the heavens were opened to the ancients, that these prophets had messages to record. In other words, knowing that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever and the fact that he spoke to them at all (however well or poorly it may have been recorded) attests that he can speak to men and women in the here and now. (3–4)

Second, “while Joseph Smith attested to the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon until his death, he seldom read or taught from it, preferring the Bible over it as a text for his teachings” (4).

Third, Millet also asserts that the Bible is not “less-than” the Book of Mormon and other latter-day scripture. I loved his quotation from Wilford Woodruff: “Does the Book of Mormon contain a different gospel to that contained in the Bible? It does not. . . . Both books contain the same gospel. There was never but one gospel and there never will be any other revealed to the human family” (9).

This chapter is followed by “The English Bible: A Very Short History,” by the volume editor, Kent P. Jackson, who is also professor of ancient scripture. Jackson’s contribution is to adequately situate the coming forth of the King James Bible in its accurate historical context. He traces the history of the English Bible from its very beginnings up through the translation of the King James Bible, highlighting key contributors: Jerome, Wycliffe, Tyndale and his successors (primarily Myles Coverdale and John Rogers). He continues with the story of the Bishop’s Bible, its key focus on the Geneva Bible, and its impact on the Protestant world, as well as its ultimate impact on the King James Bible. He concludes by noting two of the great ironies in this history—the celebration of both the King James Bible and the Pilgrims who came to America to escape the tyranny of the same King James, as well as the ultimate preeminence given to the King James Bible over the Geneva Bible by Protestants, despite the KJV’s anti-Protestant beginnings.

This chapter is followed by “William Tyndale and the Language of At-one-ment” by David Rolph Seely, professor of ancient scripture. At first glance I was disappointed at what appeared to be a nearly verbatim reprint of Seely’s earlier work, “Words ‘Fitly Spoken’: Tyndale’s English Translation of the Bible” in *Prelude to the Restoration: From Apostasy to the Restored Church, 33rd An-*

nual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 212–27. Unfortunately, this chapter perpetuates a mistake from the earlier article: the attribution of an English Bible to *Matthew Coverdale* (p. 214 in the 2004 article and p. 27 in this chapter) instead of *Myles Coverdale*. (No historical person named Matthew Coverdale has any relationship to the translation or publication of the English Bible.) Despite the repetition in this chapter of Seely's earlier contribution, he does, in fact, include one important reworking. The 2004 chapter included the examination of six words of theological significance in the English language attributed to Tyndale, whom Seely calls the "true Father of the English Bible." In this chapter, however, he pares his examination to five words, dropping his earlier examination of "showbread," and greatly expands, enhances, and updates his earlier treatment of "atonement"—hence the rewording of this chapter's title.

"The Coming Forth of the King James Bible" is the fourth chapter, written by Lincoln H. Blumell, assistant professor of ancient scripture, and David M. Whitchurch, associate professor of ancient scripture. It is an expanded version of the last portion of the Jackson chapter on the history of the English Bible, discussed above. It begins with and develops King James's accession to the throne of England and his interactions with the ecclesiastical officers of the Church of England and the Puritans. The authors then describe the rules established for the KJV "translation"—really a revision of the Bishop's Bible including a close examination of other English translations. They also supply biographical information regarding key linguists involved in the massive undertaking and the preface they drafted. This informational chapter is key to understanding the history surrounding the emergence of the King James Bible.

The chapter that follows, also by Blumell, "The Text of the New Testament," traces the historical development of the text of the New Testament. The information presented here is critical to understanding the process of textual criticism and the ancient texts available to Beza, Stephanus, and Erasmus, as well as the crucial role Erasmus played in the process and his influence on the final outcome.

Chapter 6, "The Endings of Mark and Revelation" is an original contribution by Thomas A. Wayment, associate professor of ancient scripture, which focuses on two specific "peculiarities" contained in the current edition of the KJV: the longer ending in Mark 16:9–20 and the final verses of Revelation 22:16–21. After considering the five different textual possibilities for an accurate ending to Mark, Wayment correctly (in my view) argues that, while Erasmus should have at least noted and explained this "sticky textual issue," his choice of endings is defensible, and debating the ending of Mark would have done little to further his aim, which was primarily to undermine the long-standing authoritative position of the Vulgate in favor of the Greek text. Simi-

larly, Erasmus's problematic ending of Revelation could have been handled more carefully from the perspective of textual criticism; but given the time constraints under which he was working, as well as the fact that he did not have access to a single Greek text that contained a complete book of Revelation, his decision to translate the last six verses (ironically) from the Vulgate were not fatal to his project, especially considering the fact that he revised this work five times, correcting his Greek from other texts made available to him. Wayment's contribution is an excellent and detailed analysis of the textual difficulties of these two passages.

"Chapters, Verses, Punctuation, Spelling, and Italics," by Kent P. Jackson, Frank F. Judd, and David Rolph Seely is a carefully chronicled story of change over time and is an important contribution to the reader interested in these elements of the evolution of the Old and New Testaments. This very informative and extremely interesting chapter ends with an explanation of one of the most recent contributions to the King James text—the Cambridge University Press edition of 2005, especially noting how it relates to these subjects.

John Tanner (currently on leave from BYU to serve as president of the Brazil Sao Paulo South Mission) contributed an excellent paper, "Appointed to be Read in Churches," which was not only presented at the King James Conference but was repeated as one of the three presentations at the LDS Conference Center in Salt Lake City. He begins by explaining the intent of the King James translators to produce a lectern Bible to be used and read in churches. In contrast, Tyndale had wanted to produce a highly portable New Testament to be read in homes by families. Despite what could have been conflicting goals, Tanner documents how the King James translators used up to 83 percent of Tyndale in their production, with a beautiful analysis of why using Tyndale's English was so important in retaining the poetry, cadence, and rhythm of the original Greek and Hebrew texts.

Tanner focuses on James 1:5 as an example of this achievement, and compares several translations of this verse so important to our Restoration tradition in order to provide ample evidence for his assertion of the brilliance and undoubted inspiration in retaining much of Tyndale's work in the KJV, while still modifying it where necessary. He notes that while the Coverdale (1535), Great Bible (1540), Matthew's Bible (1549), and Bishop's Bible (1558, 1604) all retain Tyndale's translation of this verse, the King James scholars varied it in particular and significant ways to enhance the theology: Tyndale's phrase "which giveth to all men indifferently, and casteth no man in the teeth" was altered by the KJV team, in favor of the Geneva Bible's "liberally" versus "indifferently," because they believed God is more than indifferent (not a respecter of persons):

For the Greek text contains the notion of God's bounteous love, not just his impartiality. King James's translators knew this and therefore

looked at other English translations for a better word. Wycliffe said that God gives to all men “largely.” Douay said “abundantly.” Geneva said “liberally.” The KJV translators opted to follow Geneva whose marginal note stresses the idea that God is “bountiful and liberal” to those who faithfully ask. . . . For its Protestant translators, the passage becomes an important affirmation about prayer—that individuals of any degree may approach God directly—and about God—that he will respond liberally, generously, abundantly to such prayers. (125).

However, he asserts, the KJV is not without its own limitations. He encourages the reader to keep other translations at hand to help clarify difficult and awkward KJV renditions, using the teachings and practices of Joseph Smith to support his point. Tanner ends his chapter with a careful examination of the Parable of the Prodigal Son as “Exhibit A” in making his case for the beauty and magnificence of the now ancient KJV text.

Kent P. Jackson, in his third contribution to the volume, continues the theme of textual analysis by examining alternative translations to the KJV that emerged during Joseph Smith’s lifetime. His chapter, “The King James Bible in the Days of Joseph Smith,” is an enlightening discussion. First, Jackson explains in a compelling way how and why alternate translations did not succeed in overcoming the common Bible of that century—the KJV. Second—and by no measure his primary point—Jackson shows commonalities between alternate translations and Restoration theology without indicating that these alternate translations had any measurable effect on Joseph Smith. They were contemporary and complementary, but not causal. After pointing out that the KJV translators—bound as they were by the values of the monarchy and Anglican Church—either intentionally or inadvertently translated important theological terms incorrectly, Jackson’s examples are *baptizô*, which was Anglicized as “baptize” instead of being correctly translated as “immerse”; *episkopos* as “bishop” instead of “presiding officer”; and, following the Catholic vocabulary, used “repent” instead of “turn around, reform, or changing one’s heart” which better communicate the underlying Greek and Hebrew words.

Jackson shows how nineteenth-century translators corrected some of these mistakes in ways that were harmonious with Restoration doctrine. For example, Universalist Abner Kneeland did not like the translation of the Greek word *hadēs* (the world of departed spirits) as “hell,” because he felt “the King James Bible had burdened it with medieval baggage not intended by the original authors” (143). He also rejected the KJV notion of “eternal or everlasting punishment” and replaced the word *eternal* with *aiōnian*, which means “for a time,” agreeing explicitly with Doctrine and Covenants 19:6–12. Alexander Campbell and David Bernard replaced “baptize” with “immerse/immersion” in their translations, and Egbert Benson replaced the KJV mistranslation of *episkopos* as “bishop” with the more correctly nuanced “overseer,” discarding Catholic and Anglican authoritarianism emphases. While these translations

dealt with theological issues, Jackson points out that other nineteenth-century translations were either attempts to modernize the English or alter it, as was the case with Rodolphus Dickinson's (1833) translation. However, despite these alternative translations and their overt or covert intentions, the King James Bible remained *the* Bible of the nineteenth century and the one that had the greatest impact on the Restoration.

Another important contribution of Jackson's chapter is the influence Johann Jakob Griesbach's (1796) Greek text, which was based on older and presumably more correct Greek texts (rather than the *Textus Receptus*, used by KJV translators), had on many of these translations. Two of Jackson's most salient concluding points are: (1) "the language of the King James Version determined the language in which the Book of Mormon was revealed" (153), and (2) despite its imperfections, we understand the language of the King James Bible because "modern revelation makes [it] work" (156).

Building on Jackson's point regarding the textual relationship between the KJV and the Book of Mormon is "The King James Bible and the Book of Mormon" by Daniel L. Belnap, assistant professor of ancient scripture. This remarkable contribution was also delivered at both the BYU Symposium and at the LDS Conference Center. Belnap addresses the difficult questions surrounding the KJV excerpts included in the Book of Mormon, disentangling this "problem" (because of the absence or discrepancy with information regarding the translation process of the Book of Mormon) by simply asserting that Joseph Smith's use of the KJV in the Book of Mormon came about through the "gift and power of God" and, hence, in a way we cannot determine "solely through scholarly means" (167). However, he makes several important "observations": (1) the one point on which the conflicting accounts of the translation process agree is that Joseph Smith did not have a Bible with him while he conducted the translation of the Book of Mormon. (2) The influence of the KJV is more pervasive than merely a series of obvious block quotations: "More than fifty thousand phrases of three or more words, excluding definite and indefinite articles, are common to the Bible and the Book of Mormon" (166). (3) The Book of Mormon's conformity to KJV English was noted in Doctrine and Covenants 1:24, which refers to the "manner" of language in which the ancient scripture would come forth; the recognizable language provided both authority and familiarity for its predominantly Protestant readership.

In the second part of his article, Belnap, referring to a "metanarrative" included in the Book of Mormon, offers the following insight:

In this sense, then, Nephi is not just shown the history of the Bible [in 1 Nephi 13–14] but more important, its function or, as the angel had suggested earlier, its meaning within the plan of salvation. The meaning of the Bible, or its purpose, coincides with the concept of the condescension

of the Lamb of God presented earlier in the vision. Like Christ, who would come down into a mortal, corrupted body, and in so doing provide a way for others to partake of the fruit of the tree, so the Bible, even in its corrupted state, would be spread across the world and become the primary means by which all of humankind could learn of the gospel of Jesus Christ. . . . [In addition,] as a symbol of the covenant itself, the history outlined to Nephi concerning the book's creation, loss of plain and precious truths, and transmission across the world can parallel the same pattern of scattering that Israel experiences, a pattern of movement necessary for the fulfillment of the Father's covenant. . . . The complex symbolism of the Bible as both condescension and covenant can lead one to associate the Bible's presence in Nephi's vision with the purpose and function of the iron rod in Lehi's dream—bringing others safely and truly to the tree whose fruit is most precious. (170–71)

Belnap's conclusions include: (1) The Book of Mormon firmly establishes the role of the Bible in Heavenly Father's plan of salvation in general and in preparing for the Restoration specifically, and (2) It is highly likely that the "Bible" seen in Nephi's vision was, in fact, the KJV—and not the Geneva Bible, or even other Bibles due to the unique way it was translated (without marginalia and with the translation that fulfilled the purposes of the Restoration).

Branching out from ideas previously addressed, associate professor of ancient scripture Eric D. Huntsman attempts to bridge the gap between ancient and modern scripture as transmitted by Joseph Smith in his contribution, "The King James Bible and the Doctrine and Covenants." Frankly, I found Belnap's explanation of Joseph Smith's use of King James English as inspired by the gift and power of God more compelling than Huntsman's socio-cultural explanation, although both are complementary and valid. Perhaps Belnap's explanation resonated more with me because of my predisposition toward Joseph Smith's prophetic role. Regardless, I found Huntsman's assertion that "an illiterate backwoods preacher could produce a stirring oration, repeating biblical language and even affecting its patterns in his own speech, simply from having heard the King James Bible preached his whole life" (186) a rather weak explanation of the KJV's inclusion and influence in the text of the Doctrine and Covenants. I was equally disappointed by the next portion of his chapter, which merely surveyed research previously conducted and published by Ellis Rasmussen regarding commonalities between the KJV and the Doctrine and Covenants. I searched in vain to find an original, significant, compelling scholarly contribution in this article. Despite this failure, I agree with Huntsman's position that an examination of the relationship between revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants and Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible, as well as his translation of the Book of Mormon, would be "a possibly fruitful area for study" (190).

The next chapter, "The King James Bible and the Joseph Smith Translation," is Jackson's fourth contribution. It employs the same template as the

earlier chapter, “Chapters, Verses, Punctuation, Spelling, and Italics,” examining chapter and verse divisions, punctuation, spelling, grammar, usage, and language of Joseph Smith’s New Translation (also known as the Joseph Smith Translation) compared to the KJV. Jackson has deftly applied his expertise in this area to this very informative survey of the text of Joseph Smith’s New Translation as it relates to the KJV. I found this chapter one of the book’s most significant contributions; in fact, the volume would have been incomplete without it. However, in the portion of his chapter on verse divisions, I expected Jackson to comment on the fact that the JST altered the verse numbers significantly in comparison with the KJV, at times making it difficult for the reader to ascertain the verse to which the JST corrections refer. In addition, in the section on italics in the KJV, Jackson points out that the early brethren were uncomfortable with the KJV’s italics, as evidenced in their writings and underscored by the fact that no manuscript produced by Joseph Smith uses italics. However, Jackson fails to comment on the irony that, in the 1979 LDS Bible, the editors use italics to show the changes Joseph Smith made to the KJV in both the footnotes and in the excerpts too lengthy to fit in the footnotes that are included in the Appendix. Still, I found the section on “Grammar, Usage, and Language” to be particularly well done and helpful. So was the section titled “Text,” where Jackson addresses the extremely pertinent question: “Is the JST a correction of the Bible, or of the King James Version?” His answer is astute and insightful: Most significant changes are to the Bible, but there are many changes that are unique to the KJV, although none of them are of key doctrinal significance.

I found the next chapter, “Joseph Smith and the King James Bible” by history professor Grant Underwood exceptional—well worth the volume’s purchase price. He begins by delimiting his study to the uncanonized teachings of Joseph Smith in three “less-studied categories—theological reflection, liturgical development, and rhetorical style” (216). Underwood’s explanation of the numerous direct and indirect impacts Joseph’s theological reflections on KJV passages had on the Restoration are too numerous to list; but his treatment is near-comprehensive (even including Joseph’s reflections on various language translations). The result is an essay that is invaluable to the student of LDS doctrine and theology and an extremely important contribution to their historical development—the best I am aware of. Similarly, Underwood painstakingly demonstrates how the KJV influenced Joseph’s language—both written and verbal—in his use of “distinctive metaphors or peculiar idiomatic expressions” (226), but more importantly by Joseph’s typological readings—meaning Joseph’s application of Old and New Testament prophecies and events to their current situations. He states: “Typological rhetoric enabled Joseph to build a powerful bridge between the sacred past of the Bible and the sacred present of the Latter-day Saint experience” (229). Finally, one of the most in-

teresting aspects of Underwood's contribution to this volume are the many examples he gives of the KJV's influence on Joseph Smith's development of LDS liturgy, including such common aspects as baptism and the Lord's Supper, alongside more unique examples such as washings, anointings, solemn assemblies, and particularly his ideas surrounding the endowment. Even though Underwood describes his contribution as a "brief overview" (230), it is extensive enough to give the reader a deep understanding and appreciation of just how dramatically the KJV influenced the Prophet Joseph Smith in these three key areas.

Gaye Strathearn, associate professor of ancient scripture, contributes "Modern English Bible Translations." After a very insightful introduction that explains the difference between "formal equivalence" and "functional/dynamic equivalence" in the translation process, she states that her intention is to "compare the King James Version of the Bible with modern [English] translations" (235). However, I found the next segment to be more descriptive than analytical, including explanations of the "King James Bible and Its Contributors," and modern English translations, including the New Revised Standard Version (NSRV), the New International Version (NIV), the New Jerusalem Bible (NJB), the Contemporary English Version (CEV), and the English Standard Version (ESV). To be fair, her discussion includes cursory comparisons between each version, but they are very limited in their comparisons with the KJV, except for the CEV. Despite this limitation, the next section of this article is exceptionally well done. Strathearn's explanation and examples of improvements and advances on our collective understanding of biblical languages, textual finds since the KJV, advances in textual criticism, and developments in theological interpretations are informative and significant. Strathearn's chapter ends with what is perhaps the best analysis of differences between modern translations and the KJV under the subheading "Modernizing the Archaic Language of the King James Bible," which offers four concrete examples of how modern translations vary from the KJV. Taken together, this is an excellent piece and an important contribution to this volume.

The last chapter, "The Latter-day Saint Edition of the King James Bible," is authored by Fred E. Woods, professor of Church history and doctrine. This essay provides an excellent and detailed history of the origins, development, and publication of the LDS Church's 1979 edition of the King James Bible, with its important improvements on prior editions: the Bible Dictionary, the Topical Guide, the incorporation of footnotes, and an Appendix featuring key excerpts from Joseph Smith's New Translation, as well as important cross-references and alternative Greek and Hebrew translations. Woods provides succinct descriptions of those who played primary roles in the entire process, including apostles, Church employees, scholars from the BYU community, and others, and their individual and group contributions. This chapter is an im-

portant contribution to the “story” of the LDS edition of the KJV, as well as a great capstone to this volume.

Overall, this volume is an important contribution to LDS scholarship pertaining to the King James Bible, with a collection of unusually pertinent and scholarly pieces explaining the relationship, as stated in the title of the volume, between the King James Version of the Bible and the Restoration movement. An unusual glitch is that page numbers, located at the bottom center of each page, abruptly end on page 218, and do not resume again until page 235. Other than this odd omission, I wholeheartedly endorse this volume for those interested in the text of the KJV and how it relates to the Restoration, to other scriptures unique to the Latter-day Saints, and to other Bible translations.

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Lee Trepanier and Lynita K. Newswander. *LDS in the USA: Mormonism and the Making of American Culture*. Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2012. 166 pages. Paper: \$24.95; ISBN: 16-025-832-77

Reviewed by Boyd Jay Petersen

Following in the tradition of Richard Bushman’s *Mormonism: A Very Short Introduction* or Terryl Givens’s *The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction*, *LDS in the USA* sets out to be “an introductory text to the study of Mormonism” written primarily for a non-Mormon audience (6). The authors’ goal is to “steer away from vehement apologetics and vitriolic attacks” and examine both Mormonism’s contributions and shortfalls (7). Authors Lee Trepanier, an associate professor of political science at Saginaw Valley State University, and Lynita K. Newswander, adjunct professor of political science at the University of South Dakota, collaborated on the book after a chance meeting at Princeton University. Trepanier’s interest in Mormonism was generated by living in Utah for four years, and Newswander had completed a dissertation on Mormonism in Jacksonian America.

The goal of the book is to show the role of Mormonism in America, how America has been shaped by Mormonism while at the same time how Mormons have not fully been assimilated into that larger culture. Chapter 1 discusses Mormonism in popular culture. Chapter 2 explains the history of polygamy. Mormons in politics is the focus of Chapter 3. And Chapter 4 looks at how Mormon theology simultaneously reflects America culture while offend-

ing American Christian sensibilities. Finally, in Chapter 5, the authors discuss how, as a rags-to-riches narrative, Mormon history can be seen as the quintessential American narrative.

Unfortunately, the book offers very little to non-Mormon readers and even less to Mormons. The book has no unifying focus. The chapters seem almost random and the authors offer no explanation about why they chose to cover these subjects while leaving others out. The analysis is superficial and trite. In the chapter on Mormonism in popular culture, the authors' main point is that the portrayal of Mormons is polarized into two extremes: "either as the epitome of all-American and wholesome values of family, clean living, and material success or as secretive, strange, and suspicious with sacred temple rites, special garments, and a murky past that includes polygamy" (9). Seemingly at random, they mention *Donny and Marie*, reality television, *Battlestar Galactica*, Glenn Beck, Stephenie Meyer, and Stephen Covey, but ignore more significant works by Brady Udall or Neil Labute. They discuss *South Park* and *Big Love*, a show that, they acknowledge, is not about contemporary Mormons but about Mormon fundamentalists, yet fail to consider the much more significant *Angels in America*.

More important, the authors offer little real analysis of any of these works, seem to understand Mormon culture at a fairly superficial level, and contradict themselves in evaluating the reach of Mormon culture. For example, they state that Orson Scott Card's books have "no overt ties to his religion" (25) even though Card's Alvin Maker series retells the Joseph Smith story, his Homecoming series retells the Book of Mormon narrative, and *Lost Boys* has all-Mormon characters—to cite only a few of the many examples of Mormonism in Card's work. They state that "Mormon filmography as such has yet to reach out to a broader audience" (21), even as they discuss *Napoleon Dynamite* and the feature films of Don Bluth, concluding that, through these "sanguine and seemingly innocuous stories . . . the story of Mormonism, with its deep-seated, reverential belief in the American dream and values of family, sexual purity, and all around clean living, enters the homes and psyche of millions of Americans and other viewers around the world" (22–23). The authors never explore the differences in the ways Mormons portray Mormons versus the way non-Mormons portray Mormons. And they sum up the chapter by stating that "Americans seem to want the all-American values of *Donny and Marie* as well as the strange and the bizarre of *Big Love*" (27), but they fail to explore why.

Chapter 2, "An American Marriage," which focuses on the history of polygamy both within the LDS Church and among the various sects that left it, is mostly accurate and sometimes quite nuanced, but nevertheless still propagates several stereotypes about polygamy. For example, the book perpetrates the idea that polygamy benefited "dependent women and children [who]

greatly outnumbered the men and therefore needed food, shelter, and care” (35). In fact, in the early years of Mormon settlement, men sometimes outnumbered women with some towns having three times as many unmarried men as women. Furthermore, the text does not deal with Church-sanctioned post-Manifesto plural marriages, making it seem as if the Church gave up the practice at the time of the first Manifesto in 1890. Considering the space limitations of this short-introduction genre, I found the coverage of the various fundamentalist factions fairly substantial, neither sensationalizing nor downplaying the internal power struggles and the problems of coexisting within the larger LDS community. The authors also discuss the irony that the national media portrayed the 1953 Short Creek Raid on fundamentalists as “un-American” while the LDS Church had been persecuted for practicing polygamy only half a century earlier. And while they mention the “implicit support” (43) of the LDS Church in that raid, they fail to note the irony that the LDS-published *Deseret News* applauded the raid, stating that “law abiding citizens of Utah and Arizona owe a debt of gratitude to Arizona’s Governor,” while David O. McKay was reported to have said that “the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is in full harmony with the actions of the state of Arizona in the Short Creek episode.”¹ Nevertheless, I did find it insightful that the authors attributed the Church’s stance against same-sex marriage and support for Proposition 8 in California to the fact that “the LDS Church paid an enormous price to enter into American civilization by renouncing the practice of polygamy in favor of monogamous marriage between one man and one woman.” As the authors state, “To give up this position for same-sex marriage would be an affront to those ancestors who made that sacrifice” (47). While I’m not convinced that this is the conscious reason for the Church’s position, it may be part of an unconscious motivation.

The chapter on politics is even more problematic. The authors describe conservative Mormon politicians as influenced by their faith, while they describe more liberal Mormon politicians as having to adopt a more “secular” worldview. For example, despite quoting Harry Reid as stating that his faith and politics are “intertwined” (65), they see him as “cherry picking” issues like abortion and gay marriage “to remain true to his faith” (66). The authors fail to grasp the theological concepts within Mormonism that might lead to more liberal beliefs (like the law of consecration and environmental stewardship), while at the same time they ignore the religious tradition within progressive politics and the influence of religion on progressive leaders from Martin Luther King Jr. to Barack Obama.

¹Martha Sonntag Bradley, *Kidnapped from That Land: The Government Raids on the Short Creek Polygamists* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1993), 148.

My biggest concern with this book is that it ignores the tensions, or what Terryl Givens has called paradoxes, within Mormon theology and culture. The authors use a broad brush to describe Mormon culture and fail to understand the forces at work within that culture—forces that make Mormonism a vibrant religion. They recognize the ways Mormonism has shaped the broader American culture (e.g., the way the *Reynolds* decision outlawing polygamy reshaped federal jurisdiction over states), and they acknowledge that Mormonism is stereotyped as an industrious all-American religion on the one hand and as the frightening outsider on the other. Yet without pointing out the nuances and tensions within Mormon theology and culture, the authors themselves are guilty of stereotyping Mormons. While I recognize the limits of a “short introduction” and understand that the book is written for a non-Mormon audience, I think Baylor University Press could produce a more informative, scholarly, and useful introduction than *LDS in the USA*.

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William G. Hartley. *My Fellow Servants: Essays on the History of the Priesthood*. Provo, Utah: BYU Studies, 2010. Xix, 492 pp. Black and white photographs, illustrations, notes, index. Paper: \$24.99; ISBN 978-0-8425-2767-5

Reviewed by Matthew R. Lee

In 1972, as an employee of the newly created LDS Church Historical Department, William G. Hartley received an assignment from Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington to write short histories on deacons, teachers, and priests. The following year, he was called to serve on a research task committee created by a Melchizedek Priesthood Committee of the Twelve with the responsibility of “bringing together the basic research necessary to give a historical understanding and perspective of priesthood roles, callings, duties and other similar priesthood and Church government information” (xv). Thus by profession and for two years as a Church assignment, Hartley was “immersed in studying the Church’s organizational development” (xv).

This volume comprises twenty essays published between 1974 and 2002, including fifty-nine illustrations, and sixty-four pages of endnotes, focused on Latter-day Saint priesthood organization and development. It represents only

a small portion of Hartley's lifelong contributions to the study of Mormon history. The collection is of value in at least three ways: it (1) chronicles the application of the revelations on priesthood office and quorums; (2) reveals the impact of quorums on the development of the Church; and (3) directs readers to primary sources.

The chapters are grouped in four sections: (1) "Priesthood Restoration," (2) "Aaronic Priesthood," (3) "Melchizedek Priesthood," and (4) "Administrative/Organization History." As might be expected from work spanning almost thirty years, threads from one topic are woven through more than one chapter. In some cases, evidence for Hartley's conclusions in one essay are better expressed in essays found in other sections of the book. While recognizing individual essays, this review treats the book as one work and includes references based on topic rather than on chronology alone.

It's important to recognize what this valuable book is not. It is not about apostolic succession, the First Presidency, temples, or the sealing power. Patriarchs, high councils, and mission presidents do not receive much discussion. Nor is it a detailed discussion of how priesthood got here; rather, it focuses on what has been done with the authority in quorums, wards, and stakes and when those determinations became effective. If there is a single recurrent take-home message, it is that organizational change is not an aberration or an afterthought. Change is an essential part of priesthood function and order. Readers familiar with the current Church handbooks and the Worldwide Leadership Training Meeting broadcasts of the past decade will recognize parallels between the interests and concerns of priesthood leaders in the past and those of today. Hartley reveals a small portion of the efforts, challenges, and success of earlier generations to expand the reach of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ through the expansion of priesthood. He points out that ordination alone is not enough to restore the priesthood. For the priesthood to be restored, in a fulness, "it must not only be bestowed but also implemented" (3).

The first essay, "Upon You My Fellow Servants': Restoration of the Priesthood," reviews the conferral of the Aaronic and the Melchizedek priesthoods upon Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, the formal organization of the Church in 1830, and the establishment of priesthood offices within the Church. Hartley draws heavily from the Doctrine and Covenants, with a reminder that "for Joseph, the priesthood was restored not only to the Church but to him as well. . . . [H]e cherished the power and authority God granted him, and he felt great joy when others did the same—all of whom traced their priesthood lineage back to and through [Joseph Smith]" (21).

Part I concludes with the next essay, "Every Member *Was* a Missionary," focusing briefly on those who believed Joseph Smith and spread word of the Book of Mormon before their baptism and confirmation. Solomon Chamberlain, for example, felt prompted to stop in Palmyra on his way to Canada

and learned of the then-unpublished “golden bible.” He met with the Smiths, “felt an instant testimony,” Hartley says, obtained proof pages of the Book of Mormon from Grandin’s print shop, and continued his journey to Canada preaching “to many listeners on his seven-hundred to eight-hundred mile trip” (28, 29). Thus, Chamberlain, Joseph Knight, David Whitmer, Thomas B. Marsh, and others were unbaptized missionaries for the Church before they were members—proclaimers with “desires to serve God” (D&C 4:2) but without formal authority.

Part 2, “Aaronic Priesthood,” leads off with a landmark essay, “From Men to Boys: LDS Aaronic Priesthood Offices, 1829–1996,” recipient of the 1996 Mormon History Association Best Article Award. In it, Hartley reviews the gradual shift from adult males as primary holders of the offices of deacon, teacher, and priest to the age-based system now in use. The requirement of Melchizedek Priesthood ordination for males as a prerequisite for the temple endowment and sealing ordinances was the primary factor driving the decline of adults holding only Aaronic Priesthood offices.

The duties of an ordained teacher “to see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying, backbiting, nor evil speaking” (D&C 20:57) were taken with such seriousness that in some wards Melchizedek Priesthood holders were called to serve as “acting teachers.” Their most important duty was home visits (49), a forerunner of today’s home teaching responsibility. “During Brigham Young’s presidency,” Hartley says, “Melchizedek Priesthood men handled almost all Aaronic priesthood work in Utah, doing ‘double duty’ acting in both priesthoods” (427).

In 1912 home visits were renamed “ward teaching,” and monthly messages for teaching appeared in the *Improvement Era*. One message explained that ward teaching was as much a calling “as missionary work abroad is a calling” and “no quorum was solely responsible for it.” Elders also held the responsibility to “watch over the church” (D&C 20:42) as standing ministers (61).

“Only after 1877,” Hartley reports, “did it become policy that all active boys receive some Aaronic Priesthood ordination before adulthood” (57, 357). In 1909 the Presiding Bishopric recommended ordination at ages twelve, fifteen, and eighteen for deacons, teachers, and priests (306). In 1911, President Joseph F. Smith asked bishops not “to mix up the old men, with bad habits, with the young boys” and in 1930, local leaders were instructed to have men over age twenty-one meet with the elders quorums (69). The current age requirements of twelve, fourteen, and sixteen became a Church-wide policy in 1954 (60).

Hartley continues the theme of “from men to boys” in his chapter “Ordained and Acting Teachers in the Lesser Priesthood, 1861–1883,” published twenty years earlier in *BYU Studies*. He shifts his focus to bishops, first with his 1992 *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article “Bishop, History of the Office,” then

“Edward Hunter: Pioneer Presiding Bishop” from *Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons*, and “Ward Bishops and the Localizing of LDS Tithing: 1847–1856” first published in *New Views of Mormon History*. These three essays should be of interest to ordained bishops wanting to understand how those who held the office during the pioneer period understood their calling and how they functioned. It was a time when “ministering of temporal things” (D&C 107:71) involved more physical labor than it does today and before bishops functioned as administrators for Melchizedek Priesthood and auxiliary organizations.

The section ends with an article on Edward Hunter’s role in directing the settlement of the Utah Territory as the Presiding Bishop of the Church (125) and another on the 1852 plan assigning ward bishops, rather than the presiding bishop, to be “the primary tithing agents of the Church” (169).

Part 3, “Melchizedek Priesthood,” contains five essays: “Brigham Young and the Priesthood Work at the General and Local Levels,” “LDS Pastors and Pastorates, 1852–1855,” “The Priesthood Reorganization of 1877: Brigham Young’s Last Achievement,” “The Seventies in the 1880s: Revelations and Reorganizing,” and “The Priesthood Reform Movement: 1908–1922.” A common theme in four out of these five is the effort required to bring the work of priesthood quorums, both at the local and general level, into harmony with the revelations contained in the Doctrine and Covenants. Doing so required more than simply telling leaders what needed to happen; it required innovation within the framework of existing revelations.

Brigham Young and other leaders recognized that although the revelations often said *what* to do, they didn’t always say *how*. “Practical application of those revelations” Hartley says, “required creativity and innovation” (228). Elder Orson Pratt explained: “To say that there will be a stated time, in the history of this Church, during its imperfections and weaknesses, when the organization will be perfect, and that there will be no further extension or addition to the organization would be a mistake. Organization is to go on, step after step, from one degree to another, just as the people increase and grow in the knowledge of the principles and laws of the Kingdom of God, and as their borders shall extend” (228).

Prior to the priesthood reorganization of 1877, six of the twelve apostles served congruent assignments as stake presidents and as General Authorities, and eight out of thirteen stake presidents served without counselors (254–55). Some bishops had only one counselor and others had seventies serving as counselors without having been ordained high priests (230). As a result, bishops without counselors who were high priests were unable to hold Church courts and “normal difficulties” went to the stake high council. (Prior to 1900, it was common for Church courts to handle water and land disputes in Utah.) Some stakes did not have high councils and others had the same problem as

bishops; they were staffed in part by seventies rather than high priests (D&C 102:1–2) (229–30). In some areas, rather than replacing a bishop, especially one who was serving a mission, an “acting bishop” would serve without ordination (358). Others were told they would be “ordained Bishops as soon as we can get to it” (234). The increase in membership, 12,000 in 1852 to 100,000 in 1877, magnified the scope of these “irregularities” (230).

The 1877 reordering resulted in the release of apostles as stake presidents; the reorganization of thirteen stakes; the creation of seven new stakes; the calling and setting apart of sixteen new stake presidents, eighteen sets of new counselors to stake presidents, 100 new bishops (fifty-six existing bishops retained); the ordinations of eighty-five acting bishops and former presiding elders as bishops; and the creation of 140 new wards (235–257).

Hartley summarizes: “Reduced to its root purpose, the 1877 reorganization was designed to increase righteousness among leaders and members. The Church exists to perfect the Saints, so by improving Church structure the Saints in turn ought to be better influenced to improve themselves” (233). The order Brigham Young established during the last five months of his life is the framework for the current relationship between ward, quorum, stake, and general Church leaders.

Within quorums, unity, consistency, and quality instruction varied widely. By 1902 each auxiliary organization had its own publication; and prior to 1908, individual stakes created their own curriculum. The Granite and Jordan stakes printed lesson outlines for their quorums. In other stakes, some Aaronic Priesthood quorums encouraged quorum members to read *Tom Sawyer*, *The Jungle Book*, and other works considered suitable by local leaders (302). Priesthood meetings typically ended in the spring as farm work demanded dawn-to-dusk labor and did not resume until after the autumn harvest (303). Activity and commitment waned, especially among Aaronic Priesthood-holding boys, affecting the collection of fast offerings. Hartley says, “One ecclesiastical official wryly observed that it was easy to get deacons to go on missions but very difficult to get them to function in their quorums” (303). To address this drift, in 1909 the *Improvement Era* became the official publication for priesthood quorums, and both Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood quorums began having weekly meetings. The following year, the Presiding Bishopric reported: “Ward authorities have been brought into close and frequent touch with the male members of their wards, by means of which they have acquired accurate personal knowledge as to the status of those under their watchful care. The social aspect of the meetings is altogether valuable” (306). Still, just five out of thirty-five reporting stakes had held summer meetings. Four years later, the number increased to 80 percent, the result, in part, of stakes moving meetings to Sunday morning rather than weekday evenings. Sunday quorum meetings did not become a Church-wide standard until the

1930s (307–8).

In 1914, the First Presidency established a Correlation Committee to prevent unnecessary duplication of materials, and all Melchizedek Priesthood quorums were instructed to use the same lesson manuals. In some cases, previously published works by James E. Talmage, John A. Widtsoe, Joseph F. Smith, and other General Authorities were selected, although not without careful attention to the content. Hartley says, “All assigned manuals were screened by a reading committee, who referred questionable statements to the Quorum of the Twelve. It was made clear to the quorums, however, that the lesson books represented opinions of the authors and were not to be considered as authoritative statements of Church doctrine” (308). The goal of quorum instruction was to “teach both theory and practice” and, as stated in the *Improvement Era*, “summons the priesthood with persuasive voice to act upon the truths learned and believed” (309).

The practice of quorums following the directive to enroll members into their quorum only if they came with a recommendation from their previous quorum caused discrepancies between the rolls and actual number of priesthood holders in wards and stakes (D&C 20:84). In 1914 the Presiding Bishopric directed bishops to enroll every priesthood bearer in the proper class “regardless of whether he has been received as a member of the quorum which has jurisdiction in your ward”; and in 1916, the requirement of quorum recommendations for enrollment was discontinued (312). These and other adjustments between 1908 and 1922 became known as the priesthood reform movement.

In Part 4, “Administrative/Organizational History,” Hartley relays some interesting details on practices and policies that may appear foreign when compared to those in use today. The designation “ward” for a congregation is a specialized use of the nineteenth century’s political jurisdictions in a city. In Nauvoo, each ward had a bishop and geographical boundaries; it was an organizational device for calling out labor and caring for the poor, but it had little else in common with the current structure (362).

It was not until 1911 that individual sacrament cups were introduced (435) and not until the influenza pandemic of 1918 that they replaced the communal “cup” (D&C 20:78). In striking contrast to today’s meetings, it was not uncommon for preachers to continue “their talks while the sacrament was passed” (436). For example, in an 1854 valley-wide sacrament meeting, Brigham Young gave a sermon while the bread was passed, stopped mid-sermon to say “bless the contents of the cup,” and then continued as goblets of water were distributed (436). Until 1946, it was common for hymns, solos, and sermons to form a background during the administration of the sacrament; then the First Presidency instructed leaders that the “administration of this sacred ordinance” should be accompanied, not with music but with silence (351). In 1867

bishops were told that just as “gentlemen were required to uncover their heads while partaking of it [the sacrament]” as a sign of respect “the ladies should be required to take off their gloves.” Cooler weather was not an exception (436).

The directive “Prepare Sacrament Table” did not appear in an official list of “Assignments for Ordained Teachers” until 1933. Prior to these instructions, “women and custodians usually prepared the sacrament table.” In 1950, the Presiding Bishopric requested that preparing the sacrament table not be delegated to “LDS girls or their mothers” (70). Likewise, they reminded leaders that ordained teachers were not to assist the priests at the sacrament table, in any manner, during the meeting (D&C 20:58). In a 1955 list “Suggestions for Aaronic Priesthood Bearers Officiating in the Sacrament Service,” the Presiding Bishopric stated that, “where desired,” young women could care for linens and trays after the meeting (70, 85–86).

Fast day was the first Thursday of the month until 1896 when the meeting moved to the first Sunday of the month, enabling students and workers to attend testimony meetings held during the day (349). Prior to this policy change, Bishop Edward Hunter lamented “that so many failed to appreciate the blessings of our fasting meetings.” During the same period, Leonard W. Hardy, counselor in the Presiding Bishopric, felt so strongly that all should attend fast meeting that he proposed that those who did not attend should double their fast offerings. He believed that “merchants in the Church ought to close their stores on that day and give clerks a chance to go to meeting” (423).

For a number of years, there was a “triple tithing”: first, a one-time tithing on all property; second, an annual tithing on the increase; and third, a tithing of labor by men, boys, work animals, and wagons every tenth day (154). What became of those who did not tithe? Bishop Edward Hunter wrote to local bishops, “This is a matter between them and their God, to us, it matters little whether they pay, or do not pay.” Likewise, Brigham Young made it clear that “there is no compulsory or arbitrary power to be exercised over this brethren, in order to coerce the payment of tithing” (161).

Hartley points out, “While modern students might find the nineteenth-century situation of wards, stakes, and quorums confusing by present standards, when understood in context those practices simply support the tenet that the priesthood is led by a prophet” (358). He outlines three ideas that may be helpful to those disturbed by change in the Church. First, one reason for a prophet is to facilitate change. “Otherwise we could as a Church lock into whatever was revealed in the 1830s and maintain it.” Second, he uses an example from Elder George A. Smith of a man who goes into a corn field after an absence of several months and cannot accept that the corn he last saw, less than a foot high, is now over seven feet high. In essence, change through growth is not only unavoidable; it is part of the plan. Third, Hartley points to a revelation given to President John Taylor in 1883 after changes were made to

the quorums of Seventy: “Thus saith the Lord . . . unto all my holy priesthood, let not your hearts be troubled, neither be ye concerned about the management and organization of my Church and Priesthood and the accomplishment of my work. Fear me and observe my laws and I will reveal unto you, from time to time, through the channels that I have appointed, everything that shall be necessary for the future development and perfection of my Church, and for the adjustment and rolling forth of my kingdom, and for the building up and the establishment of Zion.” Hartley refers to this revelation as an “elastic clause,” enabling us to understand “that the Lord can rearrange priesthood operations when Church needs require such a change” (358–60).

Hartley did much of his original research with paper minutes or microfilms; but as an indication of how swiftly historical research is changing, thirteen of the essays are available free online, two others are online through a fee-based service, and 39 percent of the endnotes (493/1237) refer to material also available online, free of charge. These advances in digital technology and greater access to archives and other repositories make it much easier to examine Hartley’s sources than it would have been a few years ago. However, in some cases it’s not as easy as “point and click.” Hartley’s titles for documents in the “LDS Church Archives” do not always match the current naming conventions in the LDS Church History Library Catalog. For example, the endnotes to “Edward Hunter: Pioneer Presiding Bishop” (149–51) contain twelve references to the “General Tithing Store Letterbook, 1872–1875,” an item I did not find in the catalog. Based on the contents of the article, it appears that Hartley is referring to CR 104 7, “Letterpress copybooks, 1872–1884 General Tithing Office (Salt Lake City: 1850–1873).” His citation refers to a specific book within the collection and directs researchers to the first of four rolls of microfilm, rather than the entire collection.

Bill Hartley’s choice of subject matter is commendable. Other historians tend to focus on priesthood offices and blessings held by a small number of leaders. In contrast, Hartley’s work directs readers down the line of authority, from the fountain to the end of the row, revealing desires to serve God and the search for revelation at both ends. To some the subject matter may seem mundane and no more exciting than a home teaching assignment. Yet to others, the content will be a profound and invigorating endorsement of the home teaching and visiting teaching assignments they strive to fulfill with honor. Perspective is the key, and *My Fellow Servants* presents a view of history that is well worth examining.

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W. Kesler Jackson. *Elijah Abel: The Life and Times of a Black Priesthood Holder*. Springville, Utah: Cedar Fort, 2013. 147 pp. Appendix, notes, index. Paperback: \$12.99. ISBN: 978-1-4621-1151-0

Reviewed by Russell W. Stevenson

W. Kesler Jackson's *Elijah Abel: The Life and Times of a Black Priesthood Holder* represents the first sustained effort to flesh out the contours of Abels's complex life. (For example, see below the discussion of ambiguities about the spelling of his name.) Building on the work of Newell Bringhurst and Lester Bush,¹ Jackson's book "aspires to be the first in-depth examination of Elijah Abel as a man" (2).

In important ways, Jackson delivers. His narrative is accessible for most general readers. In his first chapter, Jackson speculates that Elijah Ables was a slave and does a commendable effort at recreating the world of a slave in antebellum Maryland. Jackson is particularly adept at calling upon Frederick Douglass—a contemporary and fellow Marylander—to evoke details that characterized the lives of Maryland male slaves. The remainder of the volume is a whirlwind tour of nineteenth-century Mormon America. Jackson clearly establishes that Ables received temple ordinances, was ordained to the Melchizedek Priesthood, served missions, and settled in Utah along with thousands of other Saints. Jackson breathes life into a compelling figure from Mormon history and presents the full picture of a man who has too often been a mere ghost summoned during arguments on Mormonism's race policies. For this accomplishment, Jackson deserves credit.

However, his treatment of Ables's early years calls for critical inquiry. Jackson uncritically works off the assumption that Ables was a slave and draws liberally from Douglas's autobiography as well as a novel by Margaret Young and Darius Gray.² If indeed Ables was a slave, then Jackson's analysis is astute. However, Margaret Young has publicly expressed concern about authors' free use of her fiction to tell Ables's story: "I am in a rather awkward position today

¹For the foundational works on these topics, see Newell Bringhurst, "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks Within Mormonism," *Dialogue* 12 (Summer 1979): 23-36; Lester Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," *Dialogue* 8 (Spring 1973): 11-68.

²Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave, Written by Himself*, 2d ed. (New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2003); Margaret Blair Young and Darius Aiden Gray, *One More River to Cross* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000); rev. and updated ed. (Provo, Utah: Zarahemla Books, 2013).

of seeing . . . my own conjectures about Elijah Abel touted as facts.”³ Indeed, Young has noted that she “fictionalized more on Elijah Abel than anyone else.” Unlike Jackson, Young is reticent about embracing Abel’s slave status: “We do not know whether or not Elijah Abel was a slave.”⁴ Jackson is obviously aware that Young and Gray’s work is a “fictionalized account of Abel’s . . . life” (32); however, he does not offer the requisite qualifications one would expect from a scholarly work quoting a novelized account.

Was Elijah Ables a free black? In 1830, there were over 1,000 free blacks in Washington County compared to approximately 3,000 slaves—a sizable enough number to leave room for doubt.⁵ Jackson allows for it but does not flesh out the possibility nearly as well as the evidence requires. What of Elijah’s parentage? Jackson suggests that Ables’s ability to identify his father—Andrew Abel—by name suggests that his father was not a white slaveowner but an African American man (14); however, he acknowledges that he has no corroborating evidence for this supposition; it is only conjecture.

Other slave narratives make it clear that it would not have been unusual if Elijah’s mother had told him the name of his white father. Henry Bibb, a former slave, learned his white father’s name—James Bibb—from his mother, even though he had “no personal knowledge of him at all.”⁶ In Annie Burton’s autobiography, she does not list her father’s name but she gives virtually every other detail about him, such as his birthplace, occupation, and the date of his death.⁷ William W. Brown likewise learns his white father’s name—George Higgins—from his mother.⁸ William H. Singleton similarly knew at least the last name of his white father.⁹ Knowing one’s father did not make him black any more than not knowing him made him white; White House slave Elizabeth Keckley records that “she did not know much of [her] father,

³Margaret Young, Quoted in “News,” *Sunstone*, March 2003, 79.

⁴Margaret Young, Email to Russell Stevenson, February 19, 2013.

⁵See J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Western Maryland*, 1554–1555. For a discussion of Maryland’s free black population in Baltimore, see Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port: The African-American Community of Baltimore, 1790–1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997).

⁶Wilma King, *Stolen Childhood: Slave Youth in Nineteenth-Century America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 111; Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave* (New York: Self-published, 1849), 14.

⁷Annie L. Burton, “Memories of Childhood’s Slavery Days,” in *Women’s Slave Narratives* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2006), 7.

⁸William W. Brown, *Narrative of William W. Brown: An American Slave* (London: Charles Gilpin, 1850), 13.

⁹William Henry Singleton, *Recollections of My Slavery Days* (Peekskill, N.Y.: Highland Democrat, 1922), 1.

for he was a slave of another man.”¹⁰ Like Ables, had any of these former slaves been asked for their parents’ names, they also would have been able to “outright name [their] father[s]” (Jackson, 14). If Ables had been a slave, then his knowledge of his last name could simply have been the product of slave-owners intervening in the naming process by giving their slaves their own names.¹¹

There is also the matter of personal names. What appears to be Elijah’s handwritten signature adorns the cover of the book. This signature reads: “Elijah Abel.” One of the book’s editors has admitted that the cover does not depict his signature at all; it was just a “pretty font.”¹² But the documentary record is contradictory about how Elijah actually spelled his name. His name appears in signature form on only two known holograph documents—one, a letter from Ables to Brigham Young, and the second, receipt of payment for work performed with the Perpetual Emigrating Fund. Each document renders Elijah’s name differently: the former as “Elijah Ables” and the latter as “Elijah Able.” The “E” in each name is written with a different stroke, the second “E” mirroring those of census enumerators and Brigham Young’s official scribe more closely.¹³ However, a reasonable case can be made for either spelling. Various other printed documents record the name as “Abel” and “Elijah Ables.”¹⁴ A discussion of this ambiguity would have been informative, if only in the footnotes.

More importantly, the book’s title makes it clear that Jackson wants to include a full discussion of the times and places that defined his world. Yet Jackson seldom makes an effort to situate Ables’s experiences within their social, cultural, or political contexts. Whenever Elijah entered a new locale, he not only moved into a new home but he also entered a new set of discourses. Ables’s identity was layered: African American, male, priesthood holder, missionary, and pioneer. When Ables served a mission to Upper Canada in 1838, he needed to negotiate these identities in the face of attacks from all sides.

¹⁰Elizabeth Keckley, *Behind the Scenes, or Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House* (New York: G. W. Carleton and Company, 1868), 22.

¹¹King, *Stolen Childhood*, 7–8.

¹²Editor at Cedar Fort, email to Russell Stevenson, March 4, 2013.

¹³For two variant spellings from the manuscript sources available, see Elijah Ables, Letter to Brigham Young, March 14, 1854, Brigham Young Office Files, CR 1234 1, Reel 32; Receipt of payment, June 28, 1858, Brigham Young Office Files, Reel 36, both in the LDS Church History Library.

¹⁴See Russell W. Stevenson, “‘A Negro Preacher’: The Worlds of Elijah Ables,” *Journal of Mormon History* 39, no. 2 (Spring 2013): 165 note 1, 168, 235, 242.

The Canada Ables found was racked with civil revolt from the war launched by a pro-American faction within the Canadian government. The revolt created a political environment in which the Mormons were seen as American sympathizers; the British government even tried one Mormon for treason *in absentia*.¹⁵ What does all this mean for Ables? Ables probably felt it necessary to promote an inclusive, global vision of Mormonism to deflect accusations of Americanism. But Jackson leaves out context entirely.

Later events in Ables's life can only make sense with this context in mind. In June 1839, fellow Latter-day Saints in Quincy accused him of saying that there would be "stakes of Zion in all the world" when the official Mormon message—indeed, a virtual test of fellowship—was to gather to Zion without delay.¹⁶ Perhaps more significantly for him, Canada then had a large population of runaway slaves and emancipated blacks who were making a new life north of the border. Abolitionists heralded this community as being among the best that black America had to offer.

His colleagues later attacked him for directing the Saints to flee across the St. Lawrence Riverway. Jackson cites this complaint without comment, leaving it ultimately less comprehensible. Ables had (correctly) interpreted the threats the Latter-day Saints faced in this wartime environment and warned the Saints to escape from Canada before the situation became more dangerous. There is a rich corpus of literature and published primary sources on both the Upper Canada revolt as well as the region's refugee slave community.¹⁷ These events illuminate the background behind Ables's later disciplinary hearings in Quincy.¹⁸ Jackson's discussion of Ables's Canadian mission makes no mention of these events. By Jackson's rendering, the Canadian mis-

¹⁵W. H. Haggerman, Letter to Provincial Secretary, October 22, 1838, published in R. Cuthbertson Muir, *The Early Political and Military History of Burford* (Montreal: La Cie D'Imprimerie Commerciale, 1913), 147.

¹⁶Seventy's Minutes, June 1, 1839, quoted in Bringham, "Elijah Abel and the Changing Status of Blacks," 24.

¹⁷First-hand accounts of runaway slaves to Canada are available in Benjamin Drew, ed., *The Refugee* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1856). On the refugee slave experience in Canada more broadly, see Robin Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History* (Toronto: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000), 114–77. For work on the Upper Canadian revolt, see John Charles Dent, *The Story of the Upper Canadian Rebellion* (Toronto: C. Flackett Robinson, 1885); While old, an excellent work on the American relationship with the Upper Canadian rebellion is Orin Tiffany, *The Relations of the United States to the Canadian Rebellion of 1837–1838* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Buffalo Historical Society, 1905). A more recent work is William Kilbourn, *The Fivebrand: William Lyon Mackenzie and the Rebellion in Upper Canada* (New York: Irwin Publishing, 1977).

¹⁸For more on Ables in Upper Canada, see Stevenson, "A Negro Preacher,"

sion can be reduced to Ables's admittedly powerful speech in the face of a hostile audience. Though moving, this episode only hints at the racial, political, diplomatic, and military contexts that this black Mormon missionary was navigating.

Similarly, Jackson's treatment of Ables's time in Cincinnati tantalizes his readers with possibilities. Indeed, he traces Ables's precise residence in Cincinnati to John Price's home on Eighth Street, a detail that could have revealed a story. According to the 1850 census, John Price, a painter by trade, lived in a racially mixed neighborhood with a significant mixed-race population. A middle-aged man with a full family, Price probably had not moved since Ables had lived with him in 1842.¹⁹ He lived within walking distance of "Little Africa": the slums of Cincinnati society teeming with what Cincinnati historian Nikki Taylor has called the "shadow institutions."²⁰ Yet by 1850, Ables had relocated to a predominantly middle-class German neighborhood, likely in defiance of directives he presumably received in 1843 to preach to (and most likely live among) his own race. I argue that this move can be read as confirmation of Joseph Smith's probable belief that Ables was the sort of man who would seek to make a better life for himself, regardless of his oppressors. Jackson does not leave the narrative entirely starved of context. He makes a cursory mention of the 1841 race riot, an important backdrop to understanding the danger Ables faced living in a racially integrated neighborhood (Jackson, 76). Yet Jackson could have extracted far more from Elijah's world, had he fully utilized the documentation available to him.

Jackson misses a precious opportunity to highlight the singular position Elijah Ables held within the local Mormon context as well. When Ables arrived in Cincinnati in 1842, the branch roiled with dissent. While Ables would eventually serve as a guardian for Church orthodoxy, he simultaneously managed to be a center point in a colorful network of Mormon adherents and dissidents in the years following Joseph Smith's death. Two of Elijah's former mission associates from upstate New York and Canada, Zenas Gurley and James Blakeslee, became prominent members in James Strang's church and, later, high-ranking leaders of the RLDS Church. Forty years after Ables baptized Eunice Kinney, then a pregnant young mother, Kinney "wish[ed] that he could read some [Strangite] tracts and the claims of James." She believed that

187–203.

¹⁹"United States Census, 1850," index and images, *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MXQ7-MHD>; accessed March 7, 2013), John Price, 1850.

²⁰Nikki Taylor, *Frontiers of Freedom: Cincinnati's Black Community, 1802–1868* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005), 186.

Ables “would receive the whole truth.”²¹ When Joseph Smith’s brother, William, joined the Strangites, he quickly became disaffected and formed a new sect based in Newport, Kentucky—just across the river from Cincinnati. When its few members learned he was practicing polygamy, Smith fled to Cincinnati to live with his apostle, Henry Nisonger, then living with Ables. By 1850, both were living as refugees at Elijah’s home.²² How did Elijah manage to be a defender of the Church Brigham Young was holding together with considerable success while maintaining the respect of so many dissenters? Had Ables joined William Smith? Had Nisonger defected and joined Ables in Cincinnati? This question is exactly the kind that could answer the enigma of how Elijah Ables was so effective at negotiating his varied identities. Unfortunately, Jackson leaves these important issues out of the Cincinnati narrative.

Jackson’s treatment of Ables in Utah also suffers from a lack of context. Jackson gives sufficient treatment to Brigham Young’s racially charged rhetoric treatment but does little more. Jackson leaves out any mention of Utah’s embrace of slavery or public discourse in both Mormon and non-Mormon newspapers. Ables certainly would have been troubled by it; indeed, in 1861, one Saint with a similar racial make-up to Ables frantically wrote Brigham Young begging for a statement on “how fair [sic] would any legal seed . . . mix with the Canaanite & then clame [sic] an heirship to the priesthood.”²³ Jackson, however, restricts his discussion of Utah to the very limited documentation available on Ables’s daily life.

Still, Jackson’s use of Mormon documentation is generally admirable. He takes care to use a wide array of published documents detailing the public aspects of Elijah’s life. Yet he explores well-trodden territory and neglects the rich documentation readily available in the LDS Church History Library. Most disappointing, Jackson does not include Elijah Ables’s letter to Brigham Young describing his 1853 travels west from Keokuk to Salt Lake City.²⁴ Jackson also fails to utilize key documents that could highlight the political environment during the Canadian revolt: a letter by John Broeffle, William Bur-

²¹Eunice Kinney, Letter to Wingfield Watson, July 5, 1885, MS 3102, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

²²See “United States Census, 1850,” index and images, FamilySearch (<https://familysearch.org/pal:/MM9.1.1/MXQC-PTN>; accessed March 7, 2013), Elija Able, 1850. See also “A Prophetic Family Agreement,” *Covington Daily Union*, June 5, 1850, 2.

²³N. B. Johnson, Letter to Brigham Young, January 1, 1861, Brigham Young Office Files, Reel 38, LDS Church History Library.

²⁴Elijah Ables, Letter to Brigham Young, March 14, 1854, Reel 32, LDS Church History Library.

ton's autobiography, and a large collection of government documents accessible in published volumes.²⁵ Jackson does not utilize Eunice Kinney's July 5, 1885, letter, which provides rich and emotionally compelling reflections not included in her 1891 letter.²⁶ Jackson's repeated citations of *History of the Church* and Joseph Fielding Smith's *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* present smaller issues but still call for more precision in the citations (122–26, 128). By neglecting the Joseph Smith Papers project, he leaves readers craving more.

Of far greater import are Jackson's perspectives regarding racism generally. In a "Personal Note" at the conclusion of the volume, Jackson attempts to differentiate racism against individuals from racism against groups. Jackson defines the first kind as "a belief that an individual is inferior on account of [the] individual's 'race.'" According to Jackson, "Anyone who has spent any time in the Church" knows that the Mormon people are innocent of "racism against individuals." To make this far-reaching argument, he (1) restricts all "official" Mormon doctrine to the LDS Church's "official canon"—a term that, he suggests, refers only to the four standard scriptural volumes used by Latter-day Saints; (2) cites 2 Nephi 26:33 ("he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free") to illustrate Mormonism's lack of racism; (3) implicitly dismisses virtually every racist comment by Church leaders as non-canonical without elaboration and (4) concludes that "Mormons are not racist under this definition" (emphasis Jackson's) (105–6).

Jackson does leave open the possibility that the LDS Church was racist, provided that racism be defined as a "belief that a group of people ought to be treated differently, at least policy-wise, based on that group's 'race.'" If this definition is applied, then "the LDS Church—at least for a period—certainly did uphold a racist policy" (105–6).

Jackson's attempt to distinguish racism-against-groups and racism-against-individuals presents myriad difficulties. First, what is the substantive difference between dogmas of racial inferiority and institutional policies that prevent certain racial groups from participating fully in the Mormon faith community? Could it not be easily argued that doctrines taught and embraced by generations of Mormon leaders produced and sustained discriminatory policies? Further, Jackson avoids the obvious point: how did these institutional policies affect individuals? From the perspective of the disenfranchised—

²⁵See William Burton Autobiography, MS 1508 1; John Broeffle, Letter to Catherine Beckstead, September 19, 1838, MS 2463, LDS Church History Library. For examples of the government documents available, see *Senate Documents*, 25th Congress, 3d Session (Washington, D.C.: Blair and Rives, 1838).

²⁶Eunice Kinney, Letter to Wingfield Watson, July 5, 1885, MS 3102, Perry Special Collections.

which is exactly what Jackson's book claims to be—group-based discriminatory policies had individual consequences. When John Taylor told Elijah that he could not receive temple blessings, Elijah took this decision personally. This decision undermined a core part of his spiritual identity—to be a “welding link” between the races.²⁷ When Jane Manning James begged to be sealed to Joseph Smith as a daughter—and instead, was sealed as a servant—this dismantled the filial bond she had forged with the frontier prophet.

Indeed, an even larger question remains: In Jackson's mind, what *is* racism? There is a large corpus of interdisciplinary literature on racism's definitions, ranging from the older work of Winthrop Jordan to Carlos Hoyt's recent article—all of which engage in a serious effort to define racism.²⁸ Jordan admits that the term “race” is a “dicey” one (105) and, indeed, it groans under the weight of scholarly debate. But since Jackson insists that the Mormon hierarchy has not been guilty of racism-against-individuals, it becomes crucial that he give readers a workable definition of this practice he claims Mormons are not participating in. Otherwise, Jackson is using vague terms to describe vague ideas.

On the question of canonicity, Jackson is quite right to urge care in determining what makes up “official” Mormon doctrine. Indeed, Jackson's argument touches on an important debate within Mormon theological circles: How are core Mormon teachings to be parsed from tertiary, nonbinding ideas or opinions?

More than a few luminaries in Mormon scholarly circles have addressed this issue, Blake Ostler, Stephen Robinson, Robert Millet, and Nathan Oman being among their numbers.²⁹ Jackson makes a passing reference to Mormonism's “official canon” but does not provide parameters for defining it. Readers are thus left craving answers to the pressing questions he raises. Is the “official canon” confined to the standard works? First Presidency proclamations?

²⁷Stevenson, “A Negro Preacher,” 176.

²⁸Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550–1812*, 2d ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012); Carlos Hoyt, “The Pedagogy of the Meaning of Racism: Reconciling a Discordant Discourse,” *Social Work* 57, no. 3 (July 2012): 225–34.

²⁹Blake Ostler, “The Challenges of (Non-Existent?) Mormon Theology,” <http://www.patheos.com/Resources/Additional-Resources/The-Challenges-of-Non-existent-Mormon-Theology.html>, accessed March 6, 2013; Nathan Oman, “Jurisprudence and the Problem of Mormon Doctrine,” *Journal of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology*, 2, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 1–19; Robert Millet, “What Is Our Doctrine?” in *By Study and By Faith: Selections from the Religious Educator*, edited by Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Kent P. Jackson (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Religious Studies Center, 2009), 69–89; Stephen Robinson, *Are Mormons Christians?* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1991), chap. 2

If this definition of “official canon” can be used to distance the Mormon people from past racist philosophies, then what other statements can be dismissed as well? Could defiant local leaders have ordained black men to the priesthood in spite of the presumably nonbinding comments made by Brigham Young, John Taylor, or myriad others? If so, Jackson’s efforts to distance Mormon leaders from racist thought also opens up a line of inquiry that weakens and perhaps undermines the very foundations of Mormon claims to prophetic authority and continuing revelation.

Jackson gives us a brisk and accessible narrative, the kind that will inevitably be a great boon for Saints who want to begin to understand Elijah’s small part in the Mormon movement. Jackson acknowledges that his work presents an “incomplete” portrait (8). Indeed, the richness of Elijah’s personality, experiences, and social networks are rich enough to merit far deeper scrutiny. Jackson has made an important first statement in the new discourse on Elijah Ables, and for that, readers should unhesitatingly give him their thanks.

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Patrick Q. Mason. *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xi, 252 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. Hardbound: \$29.95; ISBN 13: 978-0-19-974002-4

Reviewed by Melvin C. Johnson

Transparency dictates that I tell the reader I do not know Patrick Q. Mason, author of *The Mormon Menace: Violence and Anti-Mormonism in the Postbellum South*, and that I have not been a member of the Latter-day Saint faith for three decades. I do have many family members and friends who practice Mormonism faithfully. I comfortably attend Church meetings with them several times a year. Having lived for many years in Georgia and southeast Texas off and on since 1976, my research, writing, and speaking on topics such as frontier communities and piney wood mill towns have involved on occasions the regional roles of various LDS and once-RLDS socio-religious expressions from the 1840s to the early twentieth century.

While Mason states prophetically that *The Mormon Menace* does “not at-

tempt a history of Mormons in the South per se" (12), I believe that he does make serious inroads toward his stated purpose: "to narrate and then understand late nineteenth-century southern anti-Mormonism, both on its own terms and in its significance for broader narratives about southern, religious, and American history" (12–13). Mason's backdrop to his anti-LDS narrative of the South is quite clearly stated: "There are two basic truisms about the late nineteenth-century South: first, that it was religious, and second, that it was violent" (11).

Mason posits a uniquely evangelical Christian recognition to prevent what it perceived as an iniquitous LDS missionary invasion. The missionaries supposedly threatened the peaceful stability of Southern home life, which rested on the paternal role of the southern male. Southern manhood was responsible for protecting women and children from what was perceived as a religio-predator cult led by lascivious LDS missionaries seeking to ensnare young southern females for the "harems" of Utah Territory.

A quick aside: the images, photographs, and tabular data make a good and short book even better. The book's readers should check out the photograph of Brigham H. Roberts as "undercover missionary" in Figure 3.3 (41). Who knew that a religious missionary could be dark, dangerous, and dreamy? The images, cartoons, and illustrations give the work an immediate feel for the time and events. Of importance is Mason's Table 7.1: "Number of Cases of Anti-Mormon Violence per Southern State, 1876–1900" (129) in which he presents simple headings for anti-Mormon violence under "State," "Number of Cases," and "[Percent] of Total Cases." Mason's total of anti-Mormon incidents (336) is discussed below. As Mason notes, the data certainly under-document the level of violence, which makes the numbers more disturbing.

The eight chapters function equally as separate essays and as thematically intertwined narrative. Chapter 1 sets the stage for the entire book as it begins the initial probe of Mormonism and the South before 1900, the conflicts of southern Americanism and Mormonism, religious liberty and license, the roles of womanhood, home, and protective manhood, and the intersection of republicanism and vigilantism. Chapter 2 discusses the murder of Joseph Standing in 1879 near Varnell Station, Georgia, and Chapter 3 the Cane Creek Massacre in Hickman County, Tennessee, in 1884. Chapter 4 powerfully portrays the region's concern about LDS missionaries and their supposed business of seducing vulnerable, credulous southern girls and women for a lifetime of slavery in Mormon "harems" in Utah Territory. Chapter 5 studies both sides' perspectives from possible legal, political, and party line remedies. Chapter 6 describes southern and national fears of LDS theocracy, and the author makes good use of the strange justification by southern politicians in using national remedies to suppress what should have been a state's rights issue in Utah Territory. Chapter 7 crunches the numbers and describes

the behavior of violence in the South against Mormons. Unintended irony reveals the similarity of American citizens saving the citizenry from themselves (whether in the South or in Utah Territory) through violence and intimidation. Chapter 8 naturally deepens the continuing development of an LDS apologetics that allows Mormons to identify and separate themselves from the “others.”

Mason makes his case for the uniqueness of Mormon persecution in the South because of their religion, despite the fact that “more Catholics were lynched in the late-nineteenth century South than any other religious group (excepting black Christians), more than Mormons and Jews combined” (180). In a ten-year period alone, “from 1891 to 1901, at least nineteen Italians and twenty-four Mexicans—virtually all of whom we can assume were at least nominally Catholic—fell to southern lynch mobs” (180–81). Violence often transcended shared race or religion. The author argues skillfully: “Just as their common Protestantism did not stop southern whites from lynching African Americans, their shared Catholicism did not prevent well-established French and Irish Catholics from being among the leading proponents of anti-Sicilian sentiment throughout Louisiana” in the famous New Orleans jail lynchings of Italian mafioso-type immigrants (181). Where Mason cannot carry his case with certain facts, he does not try.

It is well that he does not, because the incomplete data cannot support a suggestion that the “Mormon menace” was anything more to southerners than a sporadic irritation flaring into violence and, very rarely, murder. The numbers are conclusive. From 1876 to 1900, Mason quantifies a total of 336 cases of anti-Mormon Southern violence with fewer than ten deaths. This figure is exceeded in the categories listed above each for Mexicans and Italians. Mason makes his one major mistake in that he then dismisses anti-Mexican violence with the comment that it “was more of a southwestern than strictly southern phenomenon” (181). Why then even mention it? And these entire anti-LDS numbers (336) pale into insignificance (excepting to the victims and their loved ones) when placed against more than *ten times* the numbers of lynching *murders alone*. According to the *Publishers Weekly* review, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (2003), “Between 1882 and 1944 at least 3,417 African-Americans were lynched in the United States, an average of slightly more than one a week” (www.amazon.com/At-Hands-Persons-Lynching-Paperbacks/dp/0375754458 [accessed March 1, 2013]).

Mason’s case documents an inconsistent persecution against Mormons caused by irritation of the *status quo* that waxed and waned by region and time. What was the commonality for southern persecution of minorities? Simply this: Mexicans, Catholics, Jews, Mormons, and African Americans all irritated the serious and religious nature of a parochial, largely rural group of homogeneous white evangelical Protestants; and when the irritation grew excessive,

these Protestants took action locally. No great southern plot existed against Mormons per se, as it certainly did against African Americans.

Mitt Romney's vigorous emergence in 2012 as a dominant Republican presidential candidate signaled to the reader that national anti-Mormonism is vigorously and unhealthily alive today—whether it be the Left's anxiety about the healthiness of homosexual individuals, their lifestyle, and universal marriage or the Right's evangelical nattering about cultic Mormonism. Discerning moral readers will rightfully abhor anti-Mormon behavior today as surely as they do the southern anti-LDS emotional and physical violence, culminating occasionally in murder, before 1900. These same readers should place, however, that narrative in perspective with that of tumultuous, violent Utah Territory in the 1850s, and the strife, injury, and death characterizing Mormon and non-Mormon interaction in Missouri and Illinois in the previous twenty years. Inhumanity begets inhumanity, never excuses it.

Patrick Mason magnifies a little-known segment of American and Mormon history and places it in a broader context of what was happening on the southern scene in the final quarter of the nineteenth century. The book reads well. Mason is a story teller as well as a narrative historian, which is a pleasure for the reader. I will be passing my copy on to other members of my family, and no doubt they will also enjoy it. All interested in Mormon history should purchase their own copies.

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BOOK NOTICES

Elaine Stienon. *In Clouds of Fire: A Story of Community*. Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2004. iv, 440 pp. Paper: \$20.95; ISBN 1-4184-4767-6

Elaine Stienon is a novelist who uses personal relationships to explore the unique teachings of early Mormonism. A native of Detroit, she completed her undergraduate work at the University of Michigan, where she was honored with a Hopwood award in response to a collection of short stories she composed while a student. She was the recipient of the Potomac Review Flash Fiction Award in 2011 and has published short fiction in *South*, the *Cimarron Review*, and *Phoenix*.

In Clouds of Fire is the second in a trilogy of historical novels about the early Mormon experience. The first, *The Light of the Morning: A Story of Beginning*, was released by Ensign Publishing House in 1988.

In Clouds of Fire is set in Kirtland, Ohio, Jackson County, Missouri, and the space in between. The author uses this setting to “explore . . . the diversity of people who were attracted to this new innovative religion, and the groups from which they came” (back cover). As the subtitle suggests, the story focuses on the unique ability of early Mormonism to create united

communities out of diverse religious backgrounds.

The story begins with Elizabeth, a “self-appointed spiritual advisor to the nation on matters of moral and spiritual welfare,” (2) bent on convincing the “Mormonites” of the error of their ways. She and her nineteen-year-old niece, Hannah, travel to Kirtland in order to meet Joseph Smith, get a taste for the Mormon way of life, and to win converts. Hannah, however, becomes enamored with the community, falls in love with one of the local Mormons, and eventually joins him on a trek to Missouri. A few twists and turns later, she finds herself fully absorbed by Mormonism, encountering trials and new loves along the way. Elizabeth settles in a nearby town, keeping a disapproving eye on Hannah’s increasing involvement with the Church.

Stienon paints an idyllic picture of the Kirtland years and portrays some of the resistance of the old Missouri settlers to the Mormons settling among them, resistance that resulted in mob violence. She assigns plenty of dialogue to important Mormon figures, like this dialogue between the Prophet Joseph and the skeptical Elizabeth:

“Priesthood?” Elizabeth said.

“The ministry. You see, we believe that the priesthood of old has been divinely restored. We have the same offices that were had in the New Testament church—deacons, teachers, priests, elders—and we believe that these men are called of God to serve in the office where they are best suited.”

She listened. Best not to refute it right away. (8)

The author also gives ample time to Church figures like Parley Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, and Edward Partridge, and portrays the construction of the Kirtland Temple. Near the end of the story, Hannah, after her return to Kirtland, finds herself in the temple during the dedication, listening to Joseph’s iconic dedicatory prayer. (Although women attended several of the dedicatory services, which lasted for weeks, only men were present at the first dedication.) The focus of the author’s work, however, is primarily on the struggles of community and the personal relationships in which these early Mormons were engaged. This approach is typified by the portrayal of Gabriel, a skeptical Mormon who, during Rigdon’s sermon at the temple dedication, reflects not on the pentecostal experience, but on the community they have built:

He found himself thinking not only of the society they would build, but the community they had already, all from separate, diverse groups—people who would not associate with each other under ordinary cir-

cumstances. Shakers, Seekers, followers of Alexander Campbell. Freedmen and ex-slave owners. New Englanders and frontiersmen. Huguenots and Catholics. Their coming together a miracle in itself. (407)

The story ends with the destruction of the temple and the Mormons’ trek out of Kirtland.

Elaine Stienon. *The Way to the Shining City: A Story of the Early Mormons in Missouri and Nauvoo, Illinois*. Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2011. 289 pp. Bibliography. Paper: \$15.19; ISBN 978-1-4567-5415-0

“How shall I begin? How can I write the story of my people, and this city which meant so much to them? If ever my heart was broken for them all, it is now. The things which have happened here are beyond belief. Even if I were to describe them one by one in detail, anyone reading it would only shake his head in wonder” (1). This historical novel is the sequel to *In Clouds of Fire* (Bloomington, Ind.: AuthorHouse, 2004), by novelist Elaine Stienon. It won an honorable mention in the 2012 Los Angeles Book Festival. *The Way to the Shining City* is about the early Mormons and their tribulations as they searched for freedom from religious persecution during the Nauvoo period. Stienon describes the heartache and turmoil the Mormon people faced during this trying time of their history.

The main character, Gabriel Romain, a young doctor and blacksmith, learns to become a leader even when he is surrounded by death and destruction. He is confronted with the stress of helping others through childbirth, sickness, and disease while feeling pressured from his family to court a girl named Bethia. Bethia, being a good friend of the family, has been interested in Gabriel for a while now, so his family wants him to wed her. Gabriel juggles the weight of providing for his close friends, Eb, Rusty, Nat, Hannah, and Jody, who have all become a family to him over the years, while assisting his community and attempting to keep his relationship with Bethia intact. He has to watch his home burn to the ground and be strong for his family and friends. They look up to him and rely on him as their anchor to get them through the death of their prophet, Joseph Smith, and the religious persecution that surrounded them.

Stienon mentions such well-known Nauvoo issues as polygamy and the excommunications of dissident members as hearsay, but she centers her story on the challenges that Gabriel and his family must confront and overcome. Against the background of religious persecution in northern Missouri, she tells the story of attempts to establish their new Zion in Nauvoo, Illinois. Stienon clearly communicates admiration for their strength and endurance despite the times of pain and discouragement.

Richard E. Turley Jr. and William W. Slaughter. *How We Got the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2011. xv, 154 pp. Photographs, preface, prologue, notes, index. Hardback: \$34.99; ISBN 978-1-60908-062-4

Richard E. Turley and William W. Slaughter are both employees of the LDS Church History Department. Turley is also assistant Church historian. *How We Got the Book of Mormon* is a coffee-table book that reviews the history of the Book of Mormon from golden plates to the 1981 edition in 127 pages, about half of which are beautiful full-color photographs. The prose is journalistic, with short sentences and short paragraphs (many of them single sentences). Its purpose is to explain how the text and formatting have been revised over the course of 150 years. Although the Book of Mormon has been in print since 1830, the 1981 edition is the most recent, thus supplying the dates that bracket the history being spanned.

Bringing a historical perspective to Mormon scripture is a contribution, inasmuch as, unlike most modern Bibles, LDS standard works are published without textual notes or alternative readings. The authors forthrightly acknowledge traditionally difficult issues, such as the fact that Joseph Smith translated most of the text through the use of a seer stone in his hat, bending over it to ex-

clude the light with his face (13–14). It refers to such important scholarly sources as Royal Skousen’s textual criticism, the Joseph Smith Papers series, and Peter Crawley’s descriptive bibliography. Although there is little analysis of these sources, the endnotes are unusually thorough for a coffee-table book.

However, the notes could have been more thorough and, hence, more helpful. For instance, a fair amount of the account of the gold plates and their translation is taken from Lucy Mack Smith’s *Biographical Sketches*. The authors consistently cite the original 1853 published version, which is available online; however, it does not cite Lavina Fielding Anderson, *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), which includes the 1844–45 rough draft in parallel with the 1853 first edition. Also, rather than simply citing Turley’s *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article on seer stones (133 note 3), it would have been more helpful to direct interested readers to Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, “Joseph Smith: The Gift of Seeing,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 48–68. Likewise, when the text states that Christ appeared in the New World about a year after his resurrection, the endnote cites 3 Nephi (132 note 24), while omitting S. Kent Brown’s detailed study, “When Did Jesus Visit the Americas?” in *From Jerusalem to Zarahemla: Literary and Historical Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Provo, Utah:

BYU Religious Studies Center, 1998), 146–56, which tackles the problems of chronology more directly. An endnote states that “some copies of the 1830 Book of Mormon contain a two-column ‘References to the Book of Mormon’” (142 note 23), but there is no mention of Grant Underwood’s definitive “The Earliest Reference Guides to the Book of Mormon: Windows into the Past,” *Journal of Mormon History* 12 (1985): 69–89. It is not usual for coffee-table books to include comprehensive bibliographies, but more careful documentation could have guided interested readers toward key secondary sources.

Another difficulty with the endnotes is that they do not include internet sources, which have become critical in contemporary research, and some documentary collections. The authors commendably cite primary sources in nineteenth-century LDS journals and even articles from the *Deseret News* and the *Saint’s Herald* of the 1870s (e.g., 130 note 4; 131 note 10; 132 note 15; 134 note 35; 137 note 9), yet if they had provided URLs to online collections, many of which are now readily available, readers could have access to transcriptions of the actual documents. Furthermore, Peter Crawley’s invaluable *Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church* (<https://rsc.byu.edu/authors/crawley-peter>, accessed November 2, 2012) is available online. John Gilbert’s important recollections of typesetting and printing the Book of Mormon are sour-

ed to an 1877 issue of the *American Bookseller* and an 1893 article in the *New York Times* (136 note 9–10), but scholarly transcriptions of the Gilbert statements and interviews are conveniently located in Dan Vogel's *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 2:515–52.

Marlin Kent Larsen. *The Forgotten Son: William Henry Kimball*. Hyrum, Utah: Downsville Publishing, 2012. v, 231 pp. Photographs, illustrations, timeline. Paper: \$25.00; ISBN: 978145079144

William Henry Kimball, “the first-born and oldest son, of Heber C. Kimball . . . lived in the shadow of his father yet he was a fearless, courageous defender of the saints and is remembered for his valor” (7). This description by great-great-grandson Marlin Kent Larsen sets the stage on which he “bring[s] to light the contribution . . . of this great pioneer in protecting the Church and [in] the building of the kingdom in the West” (7).

Larsen uses Heber C. Kimball's life to describe William Henry's life in the first forty pages, chronicling the Kimball family's migration from Mendon, New York, to Kirtland, Ohio, to Nauvoo, Illinois. Larsen uses snippets of letters, the biography of William's sister Helen Mar Whitney (famed as one of Joseph Smith's plural wives), and her own son Orson F. Whitney, who wrote the influential *Life of Heber C. Kimball* and who serv-

ed as a long-time bishop in Salt Lake City, then became an apostle, to reconstruct William Henry's early family life, Larsen highlights William Henry's military service in the Nauvoo Legion and his father's exploration of what is today Idaho.

The book's focus moves next to Utah, highlighting William Henry's participation in Utah's military expeditions against Native Americans, including the Walker and Blackhawk Wars, the Utah War and its détente, and Kimball's missionary service in England. Larsen then skillfully recounts the famed “Sweetwater Rescue,” when Kimball and two others rescued dozens of Latter-day Saints by transporting them across the Sweetwater River in southern Wyoming in the middle of a freak winter storm. The story receives a fuller treatment than many Latter-day Saints may have heard before from conference talks or Sunday School manuals.

The book ends with Larsen's descriptions of how Kimball's Junction, near modern-day Park City, was developed by William Henry and his families and how Bill Hickman implicated Kimball in a murder plot as one of Brigham Young's “Destroying Angels” (Danites). *Forgotten Son* then gives a brief explanation of polygamy, with special attention to Kimball and his five wives, with whom he fathered twenty-five children. William spent the majority of his life in Summit County, as a coal and silver miner, farmer, and businessman.

The book chronicles the major life events of William Henry Kimball and his family, using mainly secondary sources, with several interesting primary sources and other information in the append-

ices. The book will be informative to Kimball family members and others interested in this second generation of an important Mormon family.